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MY ODD LITTLE FOLK.

Rhymes and Verses About Them.

WITH SOME OTHERS.

By MALCOLM DOUGLAS.

ILLUSTRATED BY
R. B. BIRCH, L. HOPKINS, C. T. HILL, H. PRUETT SHARE,
D. CLINTON PETERS, AND OTHERS.

HENRY ALTEMUS,
PHILADELPHIA.

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A ROSE.

I.

THERE'S a rose in the garden growing,
With its blossom yet unborn;
It bends to the soft wind blowing,
By sun and shower befriended;
And the little sick child, each morn,
Looks down from her weary room,
And watches for it to bloom,
With the fragrance of all three blended.

II.

Dear eyes that turn with tender trust to mine—
How wistfully they shine!
Sweet, tremulous lips that bravely strive to smile—
Haunted by pain the while!
Swift with the sight the bitter, choking fears
Leap from my heart to life anew, and then
The little face fades in a mist of tears,
As suddenly the past comes back again.

III.

And yet—and yet—he has said it—
That good, wise man!
And odorous winds have sped it
O'er all of the waking earth—
Was ever a dawn more fair since time began?
Was ever the sky so blue?—
The robin is singing it, too,
With his red throat a-bubble with mirth:
"She's better—she's better at last!
Oh, foolish heart, for your sadness!
Sadness is past—is past!
And the world is full of gladness!"

IV.

Little rose,
Your delicate petals hasten to unclose,
So that, nestling against the pale, sweet cheek,
From which those other roses have long since flown,
In whispers that lull to slumber you may speak
Of the days to come, at length,
When, hand in hand together,
As we roam in the balmy weather,
God's meanest thing a beauty before unknown
Shall have for her with swift-returning strength!

A Family Drum Corps

I.

A little man bought him a big bass-drum;
Boom—boom—boom!
"Who knows," said he, "when a war will come?"
Boom—boom—boom!
"I'm not at all frightened, you understand,
But, if I am called on to fight for my land,
I want to be ready to play in the band."
Boom—boom—boom!

II.

He got all his children little snare-drums;
Boom—tidera-da—boom!
And they'd practice as soon as they'd finished their sums.
Boom—tidera-da—boom!
"We're just like our papa," in chorus said they,
"And, if we should ever get into the fray,
Why, it's safer to thump than to fight any day!"
Boom—tidera-da—boom!

III.

And, showing her spirit, the little man's wife—
Boom—tidera-da—boom!
With some of her pin-money purchased a fife;
Boom—tidera-da—boom!
And, picking out tunes that were not very hard,
They'd play them while marching around the back yard,

Without for one's feelings the slightest regard.
Boom — tidera-da — boom-a-diddle-dee—
Boom—tidera-da—boom!

IV.

The little old parson, who lived next door—
Boom—tidera-da—boom!
Would throw up his hands, as he walked the floor;
Boom—tidera-da—boom!
"Won't you stop it, I beg you?" he often said.
"I'm trying to think of a text, but instead
The only thing I can get into my head
Is your boom—tidera-da—boom-a-diddle-dee—
Boom—tidera-da—boom!"

V.

And all of the people, for blocks around—
Boom—tidera-da—boom!
Kept time at their tasks to the martial sound;
Boom—tidera-da—boom!

While children to windows and stoops would fly,
Expecting to see a procession pass by,

And they couldn't make out why it never drew nigh,
With its boom—tidera-da—boom-a-diddle-dee—
Boom—tidera-da—boom!

VI.

It would seem such vigor must soon abate;
Boom—tidera-da—boom!
But they still keep at it, early and late;
Boom—tidera-da—boom!

So, if it should be that a war breaks out,
They'll all be ready, I have no doubt,
To help in putting the foe to rout,
With their boom—tidera-da—boom—
Boom—tidera-da—Boom—
Boom—tidera-da—boom-a-diddle-dee—
Boom—BOOM—BOOM!

A SQUATTER.

TWO little goo-goos, who thought it best,
Flew one spring to their last year's nest,
And a whangdoodle in it rudely cried,
"Just clear out! this nest is occupied."
"But we want it," they said; "it was ours last year."
"Oh, it was!" said the whangdoodle, with a sneer.
"Well, you'll leave me alone, if you know what's what;
I've squatted, and, when I squat, I squat!"

CUCKOO CLOCKS.

I.

SHE said that she'd be the little man's wife,
And there came the happiest day of his life,
While the neighbors with gifts prepared to flock—
"I'd like most," she told him, "a cuckoo clock."

II.

A roguish twinkle was in his eyes,
Pleasantly hinting of some surprise,
And, while they were talking, they heard a knock,
And a little boy brought in a cuckoo clock.

III.

Then a package came which had been expressed
By a dear acquaintance who lived out west,
While from it there sounded a faint "tick-tock,"—
And blest if it wasn't a cuckoo clock!

IV.

Mrs. Smith appeared with her friend, Miss Jones,
And said the latter, in laughing tones,
"I've asked Mrs. Smith what's in her box,
And I find that we've both brought cuckoo clocks."

V.

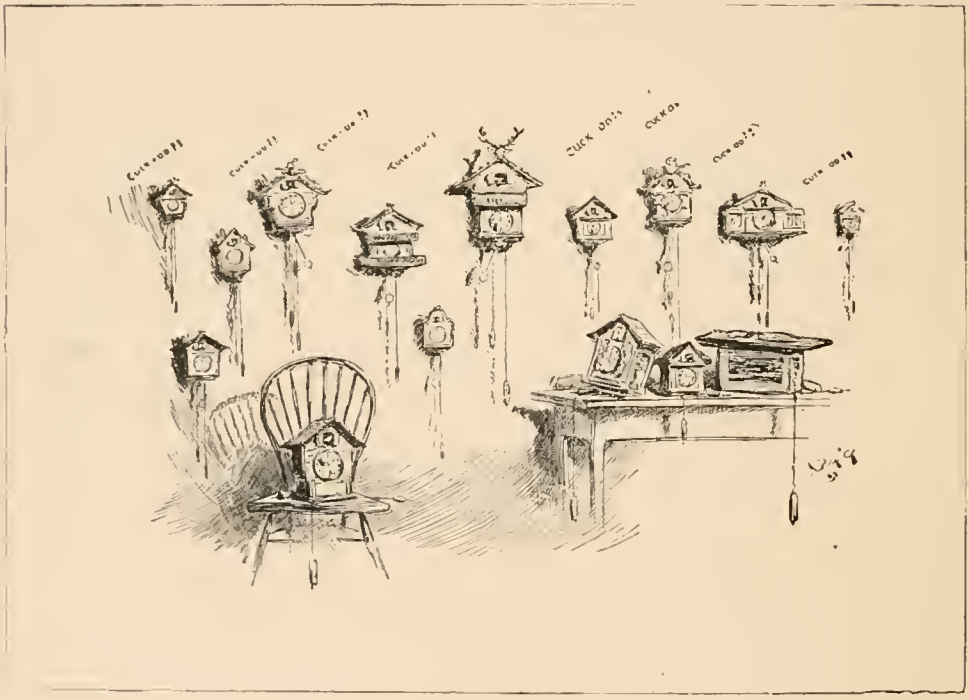
The little jeweler followed them.
"Best wishes!" he said. "Ahem! ahem!
I've just been looking over my stock,
And I thought I'd give you a cuckoo clock."

VI.

And was that the last one? Oh, dear, no!
They'd found out the gift that she'd most prize, so
All of the neighbors for blocks and blocks
Kept on coming with cuckoo clocks.

VII.

"Oo-hoo!" "Oo-hoo!" "Oo-hoo!" "Oo-hoo!"
'Twould have set me frantic, wouldn't it you?
No plate, or pictures, or glass, or crocks—
All cuckoo clocks! All cuckoo clocks!



MR. TUPPER KEATS.

I.

THERE is a little poet who is quite a friend of mine,
And the thoughts that he confides to me are really very fine,
But, with all his wondrous genius, he can never write a line,
Though he feels that he'd accomplish great things, may be,
If it didn't always happen, when he goes upstairs to think,
Before he has a chance to dip his pen into the ink,
His little wife will holloa up, and cause his heart to sink,
"Mr. Tupper Keats, come down and mind the baby!"

II.

Not a day but what she calls him, to his infinite disgust,
While his ink is all a-drying, and his pens are filled with rust;
And he'd rather not obey her, but the fact is that he *must;*
So don't forget the name I've told, for, may be,
You will see the richest honors heaped upon it, some fine day,
When the wee disturber of his peace is old enough to play,
And his little wife no longer runs out'in the hall to say:
"Mr. Tupper Keats, come down and mind the baby!"

An Unsatisfactory Meeting.

I.

A LITTLE man, while walking on a country road one day,
Met a little woman traveling afoot the other way;
And, laying down his big valise, he bowed in handsome style,
While she returned his greeting with a curtsey and a smile.
"Can you inform me where, ma'am, I can find a wife?" said he.
"'Twas on my tongue to ask about a husband, sir," said she.

II.

"I'm weary of my single state, and many miles I've gone
For one who'll cook and wash for me, and sew my buttons on;

Who'll wait on me when I am well, and tend me when I'm ill,
And never give me cause to grumble at a foolish bill.
Do you believe you'd be the wife I'd fancy, ma'am?" said he.
"I'm looking for precisely such a husband, sir," said she.

III.

He puckered up his lips and whistled thoughtfully and low—
Then slowly reached for his valise, regretfully to go;

While, with a pensive little smile, she gazed up at the sky,
And watched the fleecy cloudlets as they lazily passed by.
"It's plain I'm not the husband you are after, ma'am!" said he.
"It's evident I'm not the wife you're seeking, sir!" said she.

"COPPER JOE."

KINDER Injun-lookin', an' I guess 'at's why, perhaps,
He got the nickname 'at he did from all the other chaps;
Wuzn't nary one of us 'at cottoned to him, so
We made it interestin' right along fur Copper Joe.

II.

All the bigger fellers kep' a-drivin' him away;
Used to take a lickin' jus' so reg'lar ev'ry day;
Seems no matter what you did you couldn't down him, though—
Fur his size I never see the beat of Copper Joe.

III.

None of us 'ud chum with him a-cause he wuz so mean—
Jus' about the meanes' little kid you ever seen!
Ketch him at a baseball match, or takin' in a show—
Other fellers done it, but, you bet, not Copper Joe.

IV.

Sharp though as a jack-knife, as you needn't 'a' been told
If you'd jus' 'a' seen the stacks o' papers 'at he sold;
Never had his eyes shet, an' wuz allus on the go—
Somehow fo'ks a-buyin' looked around fur Copper Joe.

V.

An' then all of a suddint he stopped comin' any more,
So we wuz thinkin' maybe 'at he'd gone into a store,
Till someone kinder curious went huntin' high an' low
To try an' find whatever had become o' Copper Joe.

VI.

An' what now do you s'pose the feller 'at wuz lookin' found?
We didn't feel so good, I tell you, when it got around!
Sick—the little chap wuz sick—an' then we wuzn't slow
A-goin' an' a-doin' all we could fur Copper Joe.

VII.

There wuz his helpless mother, an' a little gal beside,
A-both dependin' on him ever since his father died,
An' all the time we set him down as bein' mean, you know,
Here he wuz a-keepin' 'em—poor little Copper Joe!

VIII.

Well, 'at's purty nearly all, a-ceptin' ever since
Fellers has been treatin' him as if he wuz a prince;
Let him be, an' you jus' bet 'at he kin hoe his row—
Some day when he's growed up big you'll hear from Copper Joe!

BABY ON THE RAILROAD.

BABY'S on the railroad—click-click-click-click-click—
Those are flat cars going by with Philadelphia brick—
Click-click-click-click-click-click-click—there, the last one's past!
Bumpety-bumpety—that's a switch—and now we're off at last,
With a-chick-a-choo-a-chick-a-choo-a-chick-a-chick-a-choo,
And the tootle on the choo-choo screaming zip-a-zip-a-hoo!
See the horsey-worseys scatter, kicking up their heels;
There's a piggy-wiggy running—goodness, how he squeals!
Rumble-umble—that's a bridge—and glug-a-glug-a-glug—
That's a tunnel in which one'll have a chance to hug!
Creepy-weepy—Sleepy-weepy—this train goes right through,
With a-chick-a-choo-a-chick-a-choo-a-chick-a-chick-a-choo,
And lots of more a-chick-a-choos, until the brakemen shout:
"Laststationdreamyweamypassengersallout!"

The Little Man in the Orchestra

I.

If you should go to the play some night
You'll see in the orchestra, on the right,
A little man;
And, if he doesn't astonish you
With the musical antics he goes through—
Why, nobody can!

II.

First he plays the I-don't-know-what, whose tones
Sound just as if you were hitting bones;
Then, with a jump,
He jangles the chords of the tumty-tum,
And he's sure to be back when the big bass drum
Requires a thump.

III.

Next the what-you-may-call-it must be whacked;
And then from the thingummy he'll extract
A tinny sound;
While the jiggermaree he will wake to life
Till it sets you on edges, like a knife
When it's being ground.

IV.

And there are those round brass things, you know;
What's the name they give 'em?—er—er—they go
Ching-ching! Ching-ching!
Whenever there comes a great big crash
He uses his feet, and makes 'em clash
Like everything!

V.

There's a little bald man on the other side
Who stands up and looks rather dignified;
But don't watch *him;*
His fiddle's the biggest of all, it's true,
But the only thing he can make it do
Is to go "zim-zim!"

A Very Conceited Little Man

A little man's chief pleasure was in going out to walk,
And to himself while on his way, for hours he would talk;
"For there's nothing I enjoy so much," his friends he oft would tell,
"As to listen to a person who converses very well!

"It's perfectly astonishing to see the wondrous ease
With which I can discourse on any subject that I please,
And my views upon all questions are so sensible indeed
That I never in the slightest with myself have disagreed.

"There are many who would like to hear me very much, I know
And I'm selfish to monopolize my conversation so,
But I grow so interested when I've anything to say,"
That from myself I really can't tear myself away!

FUNNY IN HIS SLEEP.

I.

HE was seated by the roadside weeping silently one day,
And, when I had drawn close to him, I paused upon my way.
"Perhaps I can assist you," in an eager tone I said,
But, looking up with streaming eyes, he slowly shook his head.

II.

"Although you might not think it, sir," he plaintively began,
"In this grief-stricken personage you see a funny man,
Who, if things were reversed, the richest honors ought to reap—
The fact is, I am funny only when I am asleep!

III.

"I'm rather dull by day, I fear, yet, strange as it may seem,
I am so humorous asleep with mirth I fairly scream;
And, though I can't recall the things that make me laugh each night
They're very fine, I'm satisfied, because I'm so polite.

IV.

"It's rude to laugh at one's own jokes, and, when I am awake,
I never even crack a smile at any that I make;
So, if when I am fast asleep I can't restrain my glee,
Consider for a moment, please, how funny I must be!

V.

"I often sit me down to weep, I feel so very sad,
When thinking of the honors as a wit I might have had
If fate at night had only made me grave instead of gay,
And in the daytime let me bring my humor into play!

VI.

"What joy it would have been to me to make the people laugh
Like others I could mention with their jolly, harmless chaff!
But, through a cruel destiny, I never, never can;
Oh, leave me, sir, to weep, for I'm a disappointed man!"

THE TOY-BANK CASHIER.

I.

WHENE'ER a deposit was made,
It was handed to him at the door,
And he'd jingle it in, with a vacuous grin,
And stretch out his hand for more;
And it happened, quite late one night,
When the household had gone to bed,
With his dreamy gaze on the flickering blaze,
To a china shepherd he said:

II.

"To the youngster who owns this bank
Devoted indeed am I;
Why, I never sleep, and I ever keep
On the pennies a watchful eye.
I haven't been tempted once
With the money to run away;
I've been faithful and just in fulfilling my trust
For many and many a day.

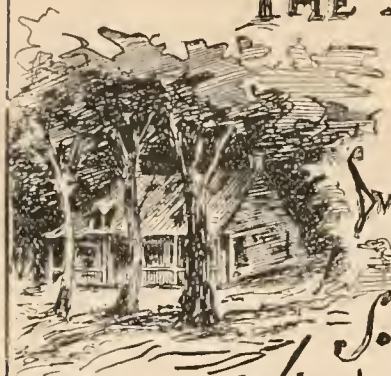
III.

"Quite often you hear of men
In my important place,
Who take their flight, under cover of night,
With the officers in hot chase.
Suspicion's beginning to rest
On all of my kind, I fear,
Yet in me, sweet youth, you can see, in truth,
An honest and staunch cashier."

IV.

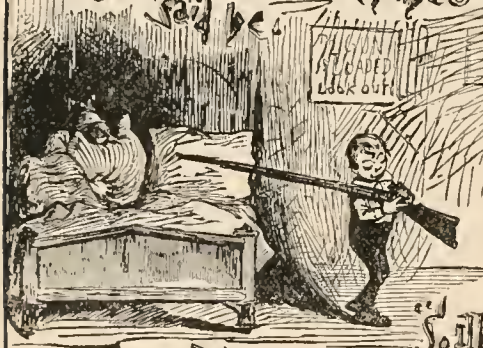
Then he stood erect and firm,
And his bosom swelled with pride,
While, with a smile that was full of guile,
The china shepherd replied:
"That you never have run away
Were foolish of you to boast;
Perhaps you would if you possibly could,
But they've fastened you to your post!"

The Nervous Little Man



In a little house that stood
In the middle of a wood
Dwelt a little man as nervous as could be:
"Without any neighbor near,
I am quite undone with fear,
So I'd better buy a gun" one day said he.

But a gun placed at the head
Of his large old-fashioned bed
Caused the little man untold anxiety
"It might go off some night,"
And then I'd die of fright:
I'll get a boy to watch the gun," said he.



He engaged a boy to stand
With the weapon in his hand,
But the youngster with the trigger was too free:
"If the boy does not look out,
He will shoot us both, no doubt,
So I'll have the father watch his son," said he.

And, guarded by the gun,
The father and his son,
The little man chuckles in his glee.
When the sun sinks in the west,
It is sweet to go to rest
With the thought that I am safe from harm
Says he.

A ROMANCE IN RHYME.

I.

SHE was always upon the piano performing—
This musical maiden, so pretty and charming;
And the noise so excited her studious neighbor
He could not proceed very well with his labor.

II.

"I'm almost made frantic," he said, "for the fact is
I can't do a thing while she keeps up that practice;
But I am resolved she shall also sup sorrow—
I'll go and I'll purchase a cornet to-morrow!"

III.

A cornet he bought, and for many an hour
He tooted upon it with all of his power;
And, at the revenge that he grimly exacted,
The musical maiden was well-nigh distracted.

IV.

"He thinks he is smart, but he's awfully horrid,"
She said, while applying cologne to her forehead;
"And, now I'm convinced that it doesn't delight him,
I'll thrum the piano, if only to spite him!"

V.

So they played with a vigor that never abated,
And both of their lives were with misery freighted,
Till it chanced that a mutual friend introduced them,
And, seized by a freak, Cupid quietly noosed them.

VI.

"He is hateful," she thought, "but his looks are quite pleasing;"
And she gave him a look that was meant to be freezing;
While a light little nothing he haughtily uttered;
"Provoking, but awfully pretty!" he muttered.

VII.

It was strange after that he should ever be praising
Her "exquisite touch" and her "masterly phrasing;"
And strange too that she to herself should keep saying,
"I really believe he improves in his playing!"

VIII.

And—would you have thought it?—he *called* shortly after,
And swift flew the moments with music and laughter;
And soon he recovered so far from his horror
That, when she performed, he would turn the leaves for her.

IX.

Of course, you can easily guess how it ended—
'Twas in a gay wedding, as Cupid intended;
Two hearts beat as one that was light as a feather,
And now they are practicing duets together.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

"I WOULD hang up my stocking to-night,"
Said a parrot, who looked like a fright,
"But, though it seems shocking,
I don't wear a stocking;
My claws wouldn't fit in it right."

Truly Repentant.

I.

Old Nehemiah Nimkins was as thrifty as could be;
The host of chickens that he kept were fine as one could see;
And so industrious were they that soon their owner grew
To be regarded by his friends as very well-to-do;
But, while he journeyed to the town to sell some eggs, one day,
He went so slowly that remorse o'ertook him on the way!

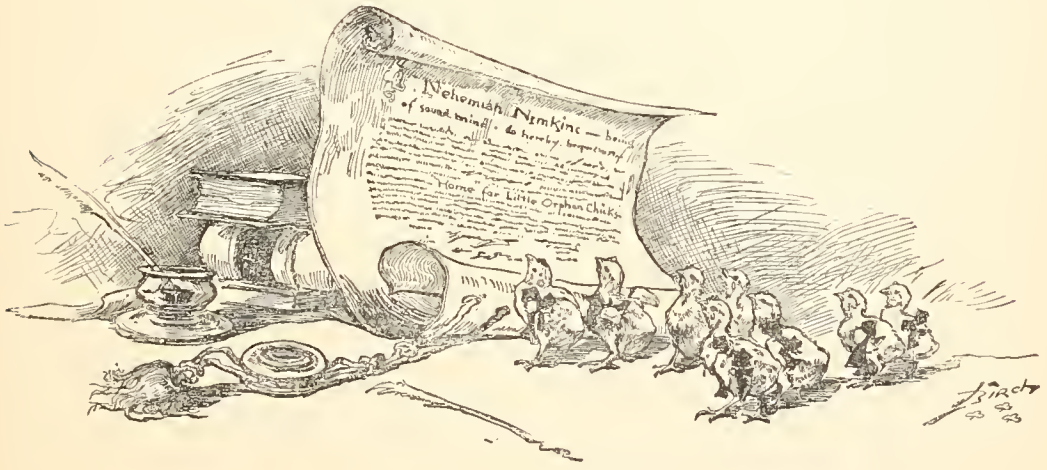
II.

"My sense of honor is aroused," he cried, "and now I spurn
The very thought of taking what my poor dumb creatures earn!

It's nothing less than robbery to sell the eggs they've laid,
So I will cheerfully refund the money they have made;
Beyond a small commission, and the corn used, and the rent
Of the wretched place in which they live, I'll give them ev'ry cent!

III.

"I'll have a skillful carpenter, as quickly as he can,
Construct a house of architecture Gothic or Queen Anne;
I'll furnish it with bric-à-brac, and paintings old and rare:
I'll place before them ev'ry day a tempting bill-of-fare;
And, if there's any money left, I'll have a lawyer fix
My will so I can found a 'Home for Little Orphan Chicks!'"



There was a dignified old bard, the chief of whose delight
Was to think of pretty poems as he lay awake o' nights
I once composed an ode," said he", that no one could eclipse,
Which would have caused my name to be forever on men's lips.

And then I slept contentedly, but, when the morning [came,]
I couldn't recollect a word! Now wasn't it a shame?

There was an old Professor who was wondrous wise & [deep,]
And noted for his recipe to make the restless sleep—
"Each night, when in your little bed", said he,
"hum o'er & o'er
Do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do, until you
know no more,
For, bless me, there is something
most astounding in a [hum,]
And, if you'll persevere, you'll
find that sleep is sure to come!"

JERRY—A NEWSBOY.

I.

EVERY day at the ferry gate
He takes his stand till the hour grows late,
Sometimes dodging with nimble feet
The heavy wagons that block the street;
While over the rumble of wheels you hear
His voice as it rings out loud and clear:
"*Mail and Express*, *World*, *Sun*, and *Star!*
All the newspapers—here you are!"
As the travelers go in a stream past Jerry,
The quick little newsboy at the ferry!

II.

Clever is Jerry, beyond a doubt,
By the way he singles his patrons out;
If one's eyes have a gleam of fun,
Promptly he proffers the *World* or *Sun;*
If another is grave and old,
The *Evening Post* he will outstretched hold;

While the laborer, ere he has time to choose,
Is quickly handed his *Daily News;*
And all have a nod and a smile for Jerry,
The shrewd little newsboy at the ferry!

III.

Once, unnoticed amid the din,
A gamin down at the dock fell in;
And then, while feebly for help he cried,
Jerry looked down from the big wharf's side;
Splash he went—and a ducking braved;
Brought him up—and the boy was saved!
Dripping—wet as a water rat—
His papers stolen—but what of that?
The day was counted well spent by Jerry,
The brave little newsboy at the ferry!

IV.

Often out in the wet and cold
A boy, with his papers still unsold,
Jerry has met, as the night came on,
And helped till his troublesome stock was gone;
And many an alley fight he's had
Over the wrongs of a weaker lad;
But few the arabs with his young might,
And blustering bullies have fled in fright
Whenever they've tried to cope with Jerry
The kind little newsboy at the ferry!

V.

And over and over again each day,
As he plods along in his sturdy way,
There rises a vision, sweet and dim,
Of the dear old mother who waits for him
With wistful eyes as the dusk comes down,
Bringing rest once more to the tired old town;
And it makes the blood in his young veins stir,
While work grows light at the thought of her—
Whose only hope and whose pride is Jerry,
The bright little newsboy at the ferry!

VI.

If your purpose be firm and true,
Few the things that you cannot do!
Step by step as you upward climb
The mountain's summit will gain in time;
Many a man renowned and great
Has sprung to fame from an humble state;
And, where each boy has a chance to rise,
Who knows but the nation's most sought-for prize
Through honest endeavor may come to Jerry,
The staunch little newsboy at the ferry!

THE CONSCIENTIOUS CORREGGIO CAROTHERS.

I.

CORREGGIO CAROTHERS was a man of much renown;
The dolls he deftly fashioned were the talk of all the town;
In a room half-shop, half-study, he would gaily work away,
Completing, by his diligence, one dozen in a day.

II.

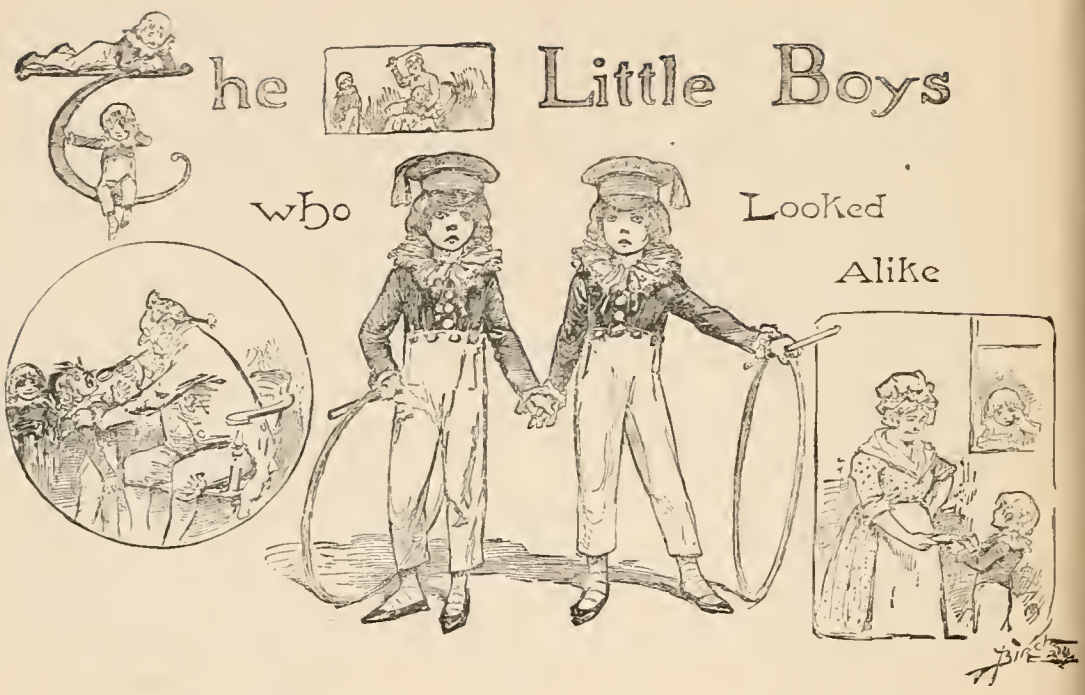
If it chanced to be fine weather, ev'ry Monday he would go
With a number to the toyman's, where he'd place them in a row;
And some would be so beautiful that one could scarce refrain
From kissing them, while others would be very, very plain!

III.

"Correggio, Correggio," the toyman oft would cry,
"Why is it you persist in making dolls that none will buy?
In my second-story wareroom there are hundreds laid away,
And, if each had a pretty face, they'd not be there to-day!"

IV.

"My work is conscientious," was the one response he'd deign;
"As they are mimic people, some of them must needs be plain.
I cannot, I assure you, give good looks to ev'ry doll,
For beauty is a priceless gift that does not come to all!"



I.

Oh, never yet were little boys so much alike as they;
Each looked more like the other than himself, folks used to say;
And, as no one between them any difference could tell,
The most surprising incidents the two at times befell.

II.

When either of the little boys was vexed with childish ills,
The good old doctor brought along his castor oil and squills,
And, in spite of tears and protests, he would very often make
The well one swallow all his horrid doses by mistake.

III.

Their mother was so puzzled about telling which was which
That it made it very awkward when she had to use her switch,
For it frequently would happen that the guilty one went free,
While his righteous little brother would be placed across her knee.

IV.

Though one at school was always head, the teacher had to put
The other, who would never learn his lessons, at the foot,
And the bright boy for his indolence was often sternly chid,
And the dull one patted on the head for what his brother did.

V.

And sometimes, too, the cook would make a little pie for one,
And give it to the other just as soon as it was done,
And, to keep the first from crying, she would roll him out one more,
And the second, if he came again, would get it as before.

VI.

Oh, never yet were little boys so much alike as they;
Each looked more like the other than himself, folks used to say;
And, as no one between them any difference could tell,
The most surprising incidents the two at times befell!

THE EARLY BIRD.

SAID a jolly, puffed-out robin,
As he kept his head a-bobbin',
"I'm the early bird that gobbled up the worm;
And I also ate his brothers,
And a half-a-dozen others;
Good gracious! how they tickle when they squirm!"

A ROSE IN THE TENEMENT.

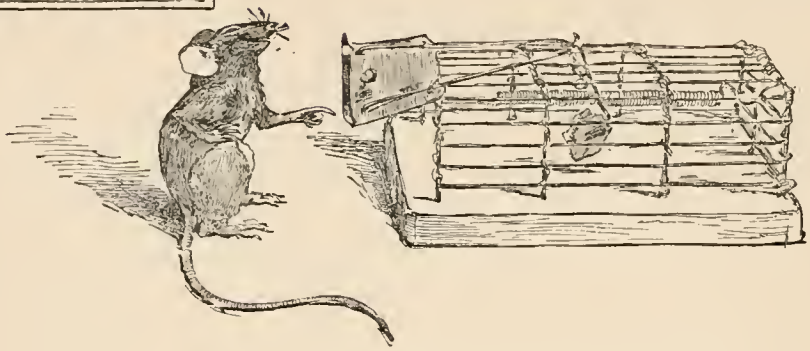
I.

UP in the dingy tenement-room,
There stands a rose in its royal bloom,
And, ah, I can guess who brought it there—
Who but my lady, so sweet and fair?
And the child, who has lain sick many a week,
Has pressed it oft to her pale, wet cheek,
Till her tears have shone in its heart like dew,
For it almost has seemed that the flower knew!

II.

Patience, poor little one, whose days
Have always been cast in alley-ways!
Soon will the snows be gone, and then
My lady, God bless her, will come again!
And far and away, 'neath fairer skies,
What wonders shall ope to your wistful eyes;
Never a doubt but the summer through
Roses a-plenty shall bloom for you!

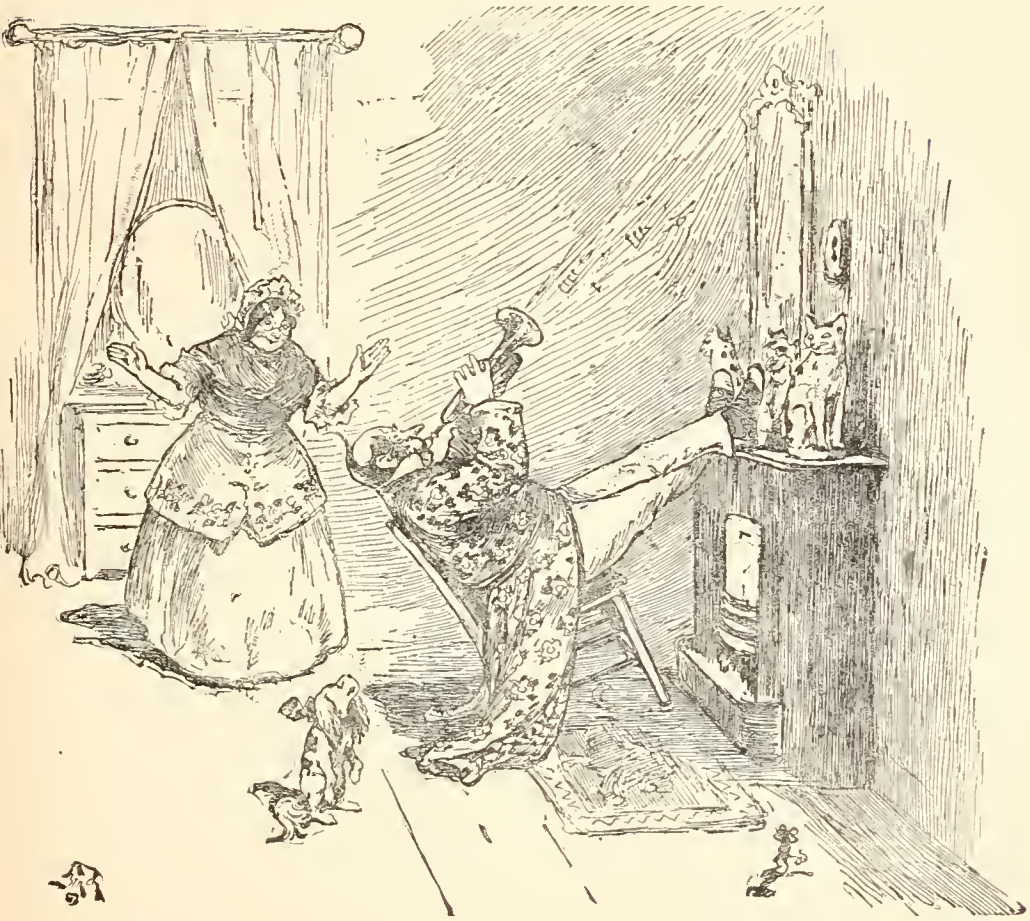
A Timid Little Woman



Though as harmless as could be—
He was just a mouse, you see—
He would give the little woman such a fright
That, though tucked away in bed,
With the covers o'er her head,
She could never get a wink of sleep all night.

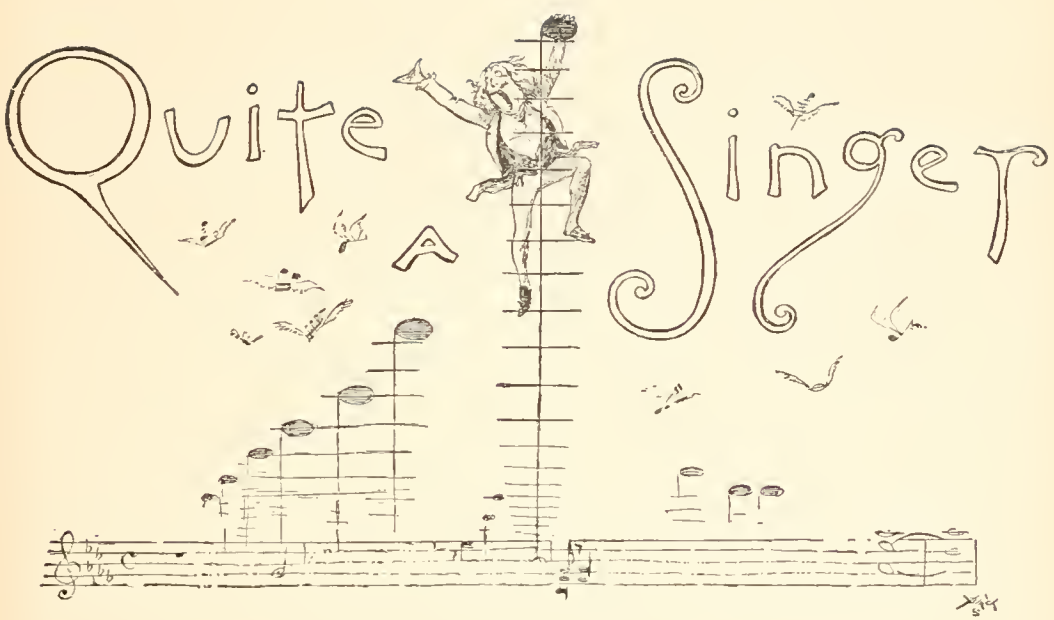
When her husband heard a squeak,
He would tell her, and she'd peek,

With her dainty little night-cap all awry;
After which, o'ercome with fear,
She would quickly disappear
'Neath the covers, with a terrified "Oh, my!"



So one day, to rid the house
Of the horrid little mouse,
Her husband in a cornet did invest;

And that night, upon a chair
With his feet high in the air,
He practiced all the latest tunes with zest.

And, though his little wife,
Who'd been deaf throughout her life,
Said she didn't mind at all to hear him play,
Yet the mouse, without regret,
O'er the cupboard put "To Let,"
And next morning all the neighbors moved away!

A LITTLE man, pressed for a song,
Could not be induced by the throng.
"I'm sorry," he said,
With a shake of his head,
"But I've not brought my music along.

II.

"It's a pity it happens just so,
For you'd all like my tenor, I know;
So high it can rise
That I oft close my eyes
So terribly dizzy I grow.

III.

"The musical scale, as you see,
Has the letters from A up to G;
And, if it were set
Through the whole alphabet,
I believe I could go up to Z!"

A BALLAD OF BRAVERY.

I.

TO spread his fame, I'll sing about
A little lad of ten,
Who, with no weapon, put to rout
An army of brave men!

II.

The glittering troops attacked one day
A quiet, sleepy town,
And filled the people with dismay
As swiftly they came down.

III.

They all prepared to hide or run,
With faces ashen pale.
All, did I say? No, all save one—
The hero of my tale.

IV.

"Cowards!" he cried, with flashing eye,
"They pillage and destroy,
And yet you men stand idly by!
I'll lead you, though a boy!"

V.

He charged alone; the troops stood still;
He bravely knocked them down!
And thus, by his heroic will,
He saved the little town.

VI.

Lest this you think be hardly true,
It should be understood
That, though the boy was *real* like you,
The rest were made of wood!

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

I.

I KNOW two very little girls;
And one has soft brown hair,
With eyes as grave as any saint's;
The other, too, is fair,
But then she isn't grave a bit;
She has a comic air.

II.

While still the neighborhood resounds
With homeward-going feet,
They furnish in the drawing-room
A rich dramatic treat,
And naught upon the stage to me
Is ever half so sweet.

III.

Ethel's inclined to tragedy,
And oft a glist'ning tear
Comes at the bidding of her voice,
But then Louise is near
To quickly banish it away
With something very queer.

IV.

So much unlike, and yet so like
A choice would puzzle you:
If either one were offered me,
I'd not know what to do;
I think I'd rather compromise,
And try to take the two.

V.

So, when the hour for bed-time comes,
And all their little cares
Are soon to be forgot in dreams,
As both trip up the stairs,
What silent blessings follow them,
And mingle with their pray'rs!

I.

Each day, leaning over the palings,
He wooed her with passion intense,
Reproving his little pet poodle,
That barked at her cat through the fence.

II.

"I've a question to ask," he once murmured—
"Will you be, little woman, my wife?
With none but my poodle to love me,
I'm leading too lonely a life."

III.

And her round, dimpled cheeks were like roses;
"Although I adore you," said she,
"I never can marry you—never!
Your dog with my cat won't agree."

IV.

"It is true," he said, stroking his poodle,
"But, then, I've been thinking of that.
You needn't distress yourself, darling,
For you can get rid of your cat."

V.

"What! Part with my dear little Snowball?
I never could do it!" she said.
"You're cruel to ask it, when you, love,
Can give up your poodle instead."

VI.

"But he knows how to carry a basket,"
He said, with a quivering lip;
"And he'll jump through a hoop—and I love him!
I couldn't dispense with poor Gyp."

VII.

"Then you see how it is, dear," she nodded.
"I see," he replied. "It is Fate!"
"And, until they make up, dear," she added—
"The best thing," he said, "is to wait."

VIII.

So each day, leaning over the palings,
He wooes her with passion intense,
Reproving his little pet poodle,
That barks at her cat through the fence!

VERY HUMANE

I MET A LITTLE WOMAN WITH A VERY WINNING LOOK;
SHE WAS LEANING FROM THE SEDGES WITH HER HAND
DIPPED IN THE BROOK,
AND SHE SAID, "I'M FOND OF FISH,
BUT I ANGLE WITH A DISH,
FOR I COULDN'T BE SO CRUEL AS TO CATCH THEM WITH A HOOK.

IT IS WICKED TO DECEIVE THEM, SO I TAKE MY
LITTLE DISH,
AND PLACE IT UNDER WATER
IN FULL SIGHT OF THE FISH,
WITH THE EARNEST WISH THAT SOME
WILL REWARD MY THOUGHT AND COME,
BUT I WISH IT UNDERSTOOD THEY CAN DO JUST AS THEY WISH.

THEN SHE NODDED AS I PASSED ON,
AND CONTINUED, "IT IS QUEER —
THOUGH FROM THE SEDGES PATIENTLY I'VE LEANED
FOR MANY A YEAR
AND ANGLED WITH MY DISH,
NOT A SOLITARY FISH
HAS EVER DEIGNED TO NOTICE IT; THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG
I FEAR!"

IN THE TENEMENT.

(Before Christmas.)

I.

DADDY'S lost the job he had a-drivin' on the line,
An' so he's took to carryin' a advertisin'-sign;
All 'at he's a-makin' now is fifty cents a day,
Walkin' up an' down, an' givin' little bills away.

II.

Daddy he tells Mammy 'at it won't be long afore
He fin's anudder job at sumpin' 'at'll pay him more;
An' Bess an' me's a-hopin' 'at he'll git it soon, a-cause
It's putty nearly 'bout the time to look fur Santy Klaws

III.

I'm 'mos' eight years old, an' Bess is littler 'an me,
An' Mammy's been a-promisin' 'at we could have a tree
Big as what the Dolans had las' year on Chrisa-mus,
An' there's seven little Dolans, an' there's on'y two of us!

IV.

But Mammy now is worried 'bout the rent a-comin' on,
An' we don't drink no more coffee, an' the bag o' flour's gone;
An' the coal 'at's in the closet is a-gittin' down so fast,
We sif's the cinders over twict to try an' make it last.

V.

So it don't much look as if a tree's a-goin' to be had,
An' we've stopped a-askin' Mammy 'cause it on'y makes her sad,
An' we both have made it up to stop a-plaguin' Daddy too
Fur centses to buy candy with, jus' like we used to do.

VI.

But we keep a-hopin' to oursel's it won't be allus so,
An' a-prayin' an' a-prayin', though we don't let Mammy know,
If there's a job to spare, 'at Daddy'll git it right away—
Sumpin' 'at'll bring him more 'an fifty cents a day!

A Bright Idea

I.

A SPRIGHTLY little lady, riding in a city car,
Alighted at a music-store, and purchased a guitar;
And she promptly made arrangements to take lessons every day
From a callous-fingered Spaniard who could beautifully play.

II.

"I'm quite a favorite, it seems, among the cats," said she,
"For every night a motley band come serenading me;
But I'm grieved to say their voices, although powerful and clear,
Are decidedly discordant to the cultivated ear.

III.

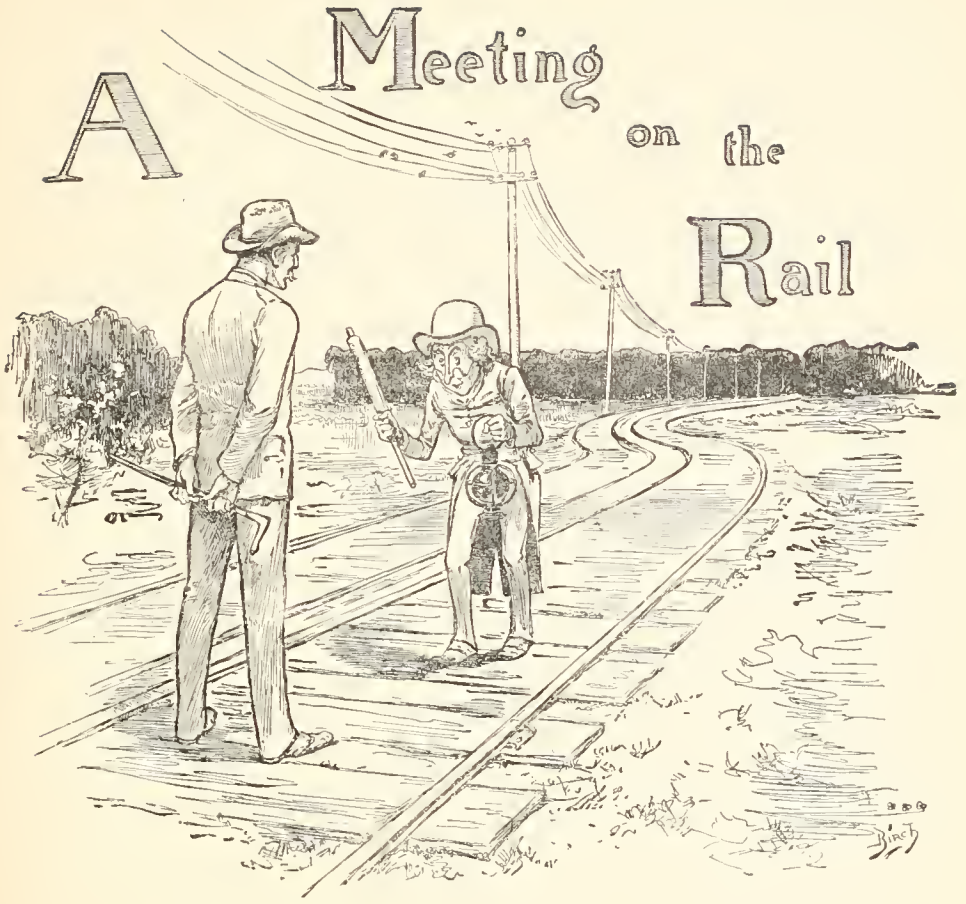
"I open wide my window, and I wildly make pretence
To enjoy the little arias they warble on the fence,
And, when the last notes die away, to merit their regard,
I scatter toothsome dainties that they like around the yard.

IV.

"But, though I'm sure the poor things try to do their very best,
You can't imagine how much they disturb a body's rest,
And I'd certainly be justified in telling them to 'scat,'
But I couldn't hurt the feelings of a little pussy-cat!

V.

"So I'm going to take lessons, with the earnest hope that I
Can accompany their voices and instruct them by and by,
For they seem to be ambitious, and material so good,
If rightly trained, I'm positive, would charm the neighborhood!"



I.

He was walking on the railroad, and the track he closely scanned,
With a red flag, neatly folded, and a lantern in his hand;
And, happening to pass him as I journeyed on my way,
We paused a moment to exchange the greetings of the day.

II.

"My friend, will you inform me," in an anxious tone he said,
"If you have seen a broken rail or misplaced switch ahead?"
And, when I told him I had not, with wonder in my eye,
He showed his disappointment by a plaintive little sigh.

III.

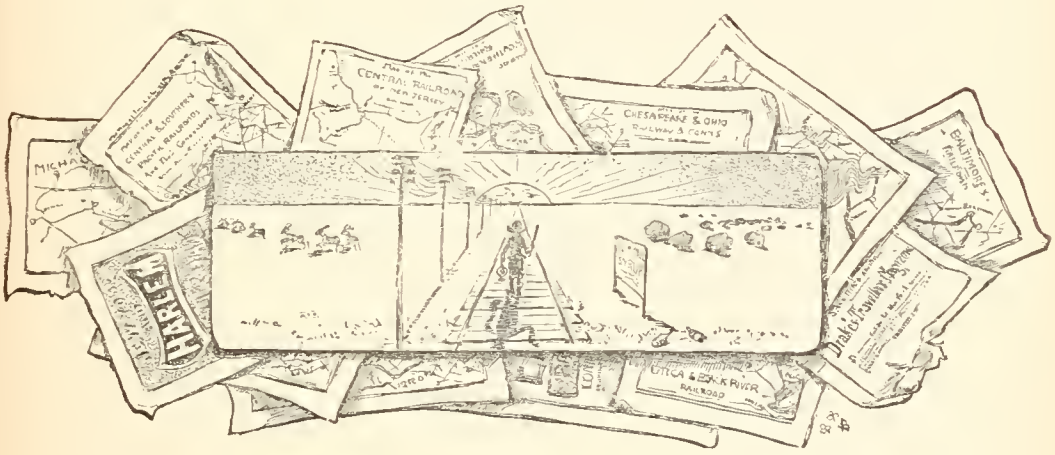
"I'm a hero by profession," he proceeded to explain,
"And it's always been the hobby of my life to save a train;
But, though I've gone on foot across the continent and back,
I never yet have found a thing the matter with the track!

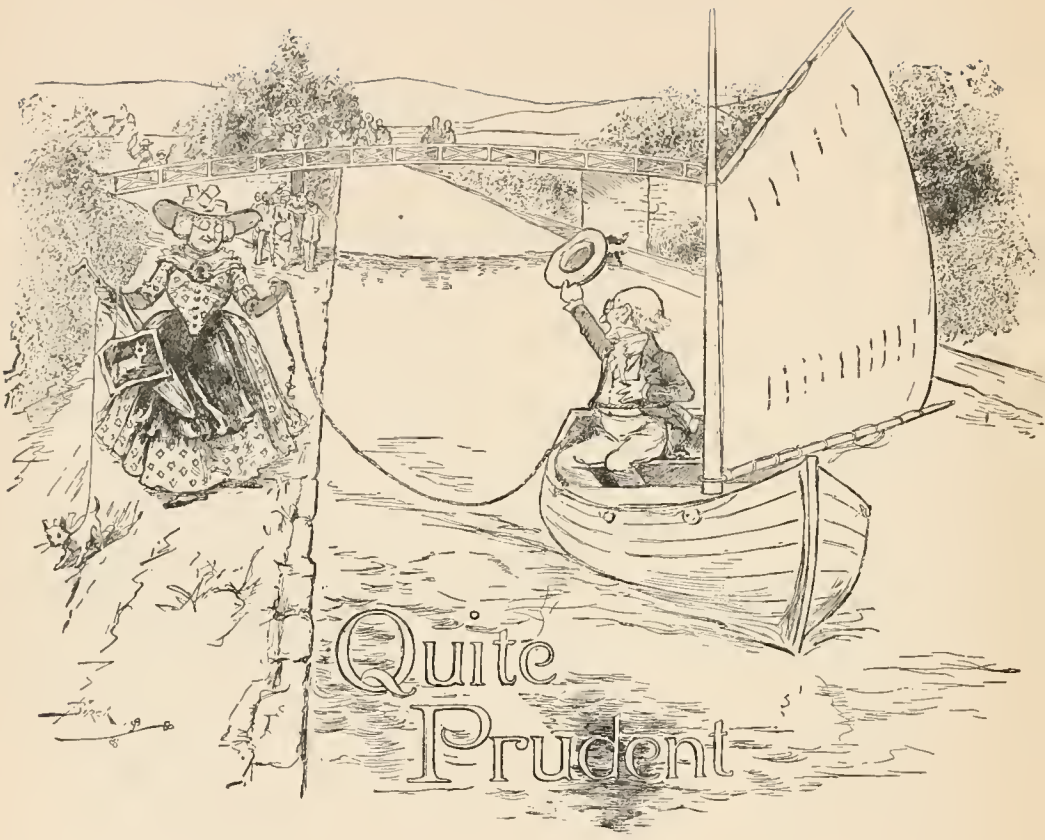
IV.

"I've a red flag for the day-time, and a lantern for the night,
To wave the very moment that the engine comes in sight;
But, in spite of my endeavors, it's a melancholy fact
That I haven't had a chance yet to perform a noble act!"

V.

And, bidding me good-bye, he slowly sauntered up the ties,
While downward at the shining rails he bent his eager eyes;
And now, whene'er in newspapers a hero's name I see,
I think about my little friend and wonder if it's he!





I.

It wasn't until he had turned sixty-three
That a longing came o'er him to follow the sea;
But his dear little wife gave a shake of her head,—
"I never could let you," she tenderly said.

II.

"You were only in fun, I am sure, when you spoke;
Why, it wouldn't be safe, for you can't swim a stroke.
If you feel you must sail, why not try the canal?"
And he said, in a weak little whisper, "I shall!"

III.

So he put, with much practice, a roll in his walk,
And introduced nautical terms in his talk;
While the neat little suit which she made him to wear
Had anchors to give him a sailor-like air.

IV.

On a day that was marked by a fair wind and sky,
His neighbors assembled to bid him good-bye;
And he sat in his boat, while his little wife placed
A rope, with commendable care, round his waist.

V.

"I'll hold, on the tow-path, one end in my hand,
And, if you should sink, I will pull you to land.
I think it's much safer," she uttered; "don't you?"
And he said, in his weak little whisper, "I do!"

VI.

Then he hoisted his sail with a feeling of pride,
And gaily sped off, while she kept at his side;
So you'd better look out, for who knows but some day
These queer little folk will be coming your way?

A CAREFUL MOTHER.

AN estimable monkey in Brazil
Gave the child she fairly doted on a pill.
"It's a nasty dose," said she,
"But just take it, to please me,
For possibly it may avert a chill!"

TOURISTS.

I.

A LITTLE man and woman, who were always on the wing,
Carried ev'ry guide-book published, so they shouldn't miss a thing;
And, happening to meet them once, they graciously unbent
To tell me of some sights they'd seen upon the continent.

II.

"At Florence," he began, with a preliminary cough,
"We saw the statue what's-its-name with both arms broken off—"
"Yes, both of 'em," she said; "and it is such a pity, too!
I really think that some one ought to mend 'em on with glue."

III.

"In Venice," he went on to say, "we saw the Bridge of Sighs
From a boat they call a gondola, and, judge of our surprise—"
"Yes, judge of it," she echoed, "when we found it was so small—
Why, it's just a plain canal-bridge, without any size at all!"

IV.

"The beautiful blue Danube," he remarked, "we drifted o'er,
And we heard the folks called pheasants gaily singing on the shore;
"While the Strasbourg clock," she added, "we regarded very fine,
But we never had a chance to view the watch upon the Rhine!"

V.

"The Russian steppes," he said, "I'd like exceedingly to see—
"But it's so fatiguing, love, to go up steps," objected she;
"I would rather go to China, where we never yet have been,
For I've quite a hankering to meet a real live mandolin!"

LITTLE MR. JONES.

SAID little Mr. Jones one day
In rather gloomy tones,
"I look just like Napoleon,
But act, alas, like Jones!"

TWO FROGS.

I.

TWO frogs walked home in the moon's pale light
From a symphony concert one fine night.

II.

She had on a gown that was tailor-made,
With a bonnet of corresponding shade;

III.

He, a flannel suit and a white straw hat—
For style, now, what do you think of that?

IV.

"Do you know," in passionate tones cried he,
"You're the dearest frog in the world to me?

V.

"Oh, dast I ask you—I should say durst—"
"You'll have," she lisped, "to athk papa firtht."

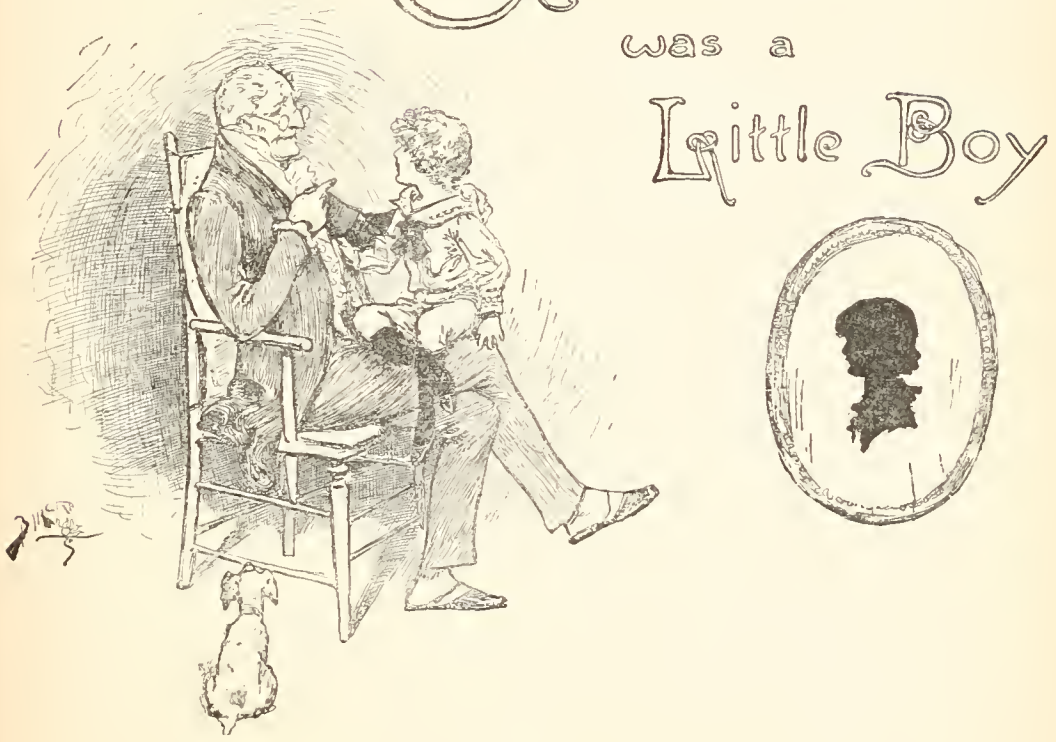
VI.

Just then her mother glared from the bog;
"Polly," said she, "who's that strange young frog?"

VII.

"It'th Mithter Rowley," she said, "and, ma,
He'th anxthionth to be your thon-in-law!"

When Grandpa was a Little Boy



I.

"When Grandpa was a little boy about your age," said he
To the curly-headed youngster who had climbed upon his knee,
"So studious was he at school he never failed to pass;
And out of three he always stood the second in his class—"

"But, if no more were in it, you were next to foot, like me!"
"Why, bless you, Grandpa never thought of that before!" said he.

II.

"When Grandpa was a little boy about your age," said he,
"He seldom ever spent his pretty pennies foolishly;
No toy or candy store was there for miles and miles about,
And with his books straight home he'd go the moment school was out—"
"But, if there had been one, you might have spent them all, like me!"
"Why, bless you, Grandpa never thought of that before!" said he.

III.

"When Grandpa was a little boy about your age," said he,
"He never staid up later than a half-hour after tea;
It wasn't good for little boys at all, his mother said,
And so, when it was early, she would march him off to bed—"
"But, if she hadn't, may be you'd have staid up late, like me!"
"Why, bless you, Grandpa never thought of that before!" said he.

IV.

"When Grandpa was a little boy about your age," said he,
"In summer he went barefoot and was happy as could be;

And all the neighbors round about agreed he was a lad
Who was as good as he could be except when he was bad—"
"But, 'ceptin' going barefoot, you were pretty much like me!"
"Why, bless you, Grandpa's often thought of that before!" said he.

THE REPROVING DINKDILLY.

A SLANGY old scarlet flamingo
Was all the time crying "By jingo!"
And the long-beaked dinkdilly
Oft said to him, "Willy,
You shouldn't be using such lingo!"

AN ACTOR'S LITTLE GIRL.

I.

NOW, it happened the play was almost done;
The lovers, their mimic battles won,
Stood reunited upon the stage,
While glowering at them, in futile rage,
The villain crouched in the limelight's glare,
With all his terrible crimes laid bare;
And there with her mother at the wing
She watched unnoticed—a little thing
Of five, perhaps—while her soft blue eyes
Filled first with wonder and then surprise,
And then, at the climax scene, with tears,
As into her heart crept sudden fears.

II.

A moment, and all the house grew hushed;
The villain stood waiting to be crushed,
And then go home with his wife and child;
And, seeing not how her mother smiled,

So full of grief was the little one
At the thought her papa some wrong had done,
Her breath came quick, and her heart beat fast,
While naught escaped her, until at last
There came the inevitable decree—
"Arrest that man for his villainy!"

III.

And suddenly, with the final word,
A childish scream of affright was heard,
And, ere the astonished mother knew
What the little one had in her mind to do,
Out on the stage she had quickly passed
Right into the villain's arms at last,
While her tiny heart with excitement throbbed,
As, pleadingly looking up, she sobbed,
Hoping to save him if she could,
"Oh, don't hurt papa, and he'll be good!"

IV.

How the audience cheered, and cheered again,
While even the players smiled, and then
It seemed that the whole house would go wild,
As the villain bent down and kissed his child,
Whispering, so that she would not grieve,
"Darling, it's only make-believe!"

But, sobbing, she would not have it so,
And held him, and would not let him go,
Until the old prompter, with a frown,
With his tinkling bell brought the curtain down.

V.

So the villain was granted a brief reprieve,
And, as the audience rose to leave,
Of laughter and cheers still came the sound,
While back of the curtain they crowded round,
And petted and soothed away her fears,
Until she was smiling through her tears;
While the beautiful flowers that had been thrown
On the stage they told her were all her own;
And so she was happy, with all her fright—
But she did not go to the play next night!

I.

Four little grasshoppers, one fine day,
Hopped on the lawn to play croquet.

II.

"We can't use mallets and balls," one said,
"So we'll play a game of our own instead;
We'll hop through the wickets ourselves and see
If I beat you or if you beat me."

III.

So hippity-hop they went around
Through all the wickets upon the ground,
Till the one who was leading made a jump
And hit the home-stake bumpity-bump!

IV.

Then out came Johnny and Bess to play,
And the four little grasshoppers hopped away.

A SOUTHERN VALENTINE.

I.

UNDER a rose-bush the little note lay
That Bertie had lost when he went on his way
To send it to Lily St. Valentine's Day.

II.

And on the same night, as he lay in his bed,
It chanced that a cricket hopped o'er it, and read
With a look of deep interest all that it said.

III.

"I'm puzzled to know who the sender can be;
But I *think* that the grasshopper sent it to me;
It looks very much like his writing!" mused she.

DELAYS ARE DANGEROUS.

I.

THERE was a little gentleman of corresponding note,
With a stiff, high Byron collar and a daisy-sprinkled coat,
Who, after meditating on the ways that lead to fame,
Resolved to write a jingle to perpetuate his name.

II.

Each morning he would rise at six, and, seizing pen and ink,
He'd hasten to the library, and think, and think, and think;
And, when the bell for breakfast rang, his pen he'd cease to chew,
And mutter carelessly: "Oh, pshaw! another day will do!"

A BUNCH OF FLOWERS FOR JOE.

(*The Newsboy's Story.*)

I.

JOE was a newsboy, mister,
Differ'nt from all the rest;
Scarce a day over seven,
An' a weak little chap at best.

II.

Timid an' bashful sorter;
'Most like a gal in his ways;
Never would chaw terbacker,
An' cuss, an' take in the plays.

III.

An', 'stead of tryin' to down him,
The fellers was kind to Joe;
An' lots bought papers of him a-cause
Of the hump on his back, yer know.

IV

An' I froze from the first right to him,
An' he somehow cottoned to me,
Till we parded it all 'cept night-time—
Lived with his mother, yer see.

V.

She had worked till the fever took her,
An' nothin' was left to eat;
But the kid, you kin bet, was plucky,
An' so he struck fur the street.

VI.

An' hustle? Well, now you're shoutin'!
Sailed right in like a brick!
All fur that mother of his'n
Lyin' so weak an' sick!

VII.

Ketch him foolin' his money
  Away like the other chaps,
Matchin' a feller pennies,
  Or playin' a game of craps!

VIII.

You could see him there with his papers
  Under his poor, thin arm,
If the day was a day of sunshine,
  Or the day was a day of storm.

IX.

An' so at last, when I missed him,
  You'd best believe I was quick
In gittin' around to his mother's
  To see if the kid was sick.

X.

An' I saw she was softly cryin';
  He'd been took in the night, she said;
An' the poor little chap didn't know me—
  Flighty an' out of his head!

XI.

Yer see, such knockin' about, sir,
'Ull do fur fellers like me,
But it wasn't the right thing, nohow,
Fur a babby as weak as he.

XII.

An' 'scuse me, but I can't help it;
I know that it ain't jest right
Fur a great, big chap to be cryin',
But Joe he died last night!

XIII.

It ain't no use a-talkin';
I tell yer, mister, it's hard
To think that I've got to lose him,
When I banked so much on my pard!

XIV.

So I've come to you fur some flowers—
A bunch to put in his hand—
An', up where he is, why, maybe,
He'll see them, an' understand!

AT THE POOR-FARM.

I.

NANNY'S at the poor-farm, an' she didn't want it so,
But she hasn't any fo'ks, an' there was nowheres else to go;
The people all was sorry when her mother died las' spring,
But none of 'em 'u'd take her 'cause she's such a little thing.

II.

She's little but real handy, an' I guess is wu'th her keep,
Fur she helps 'em with the dishes, an' is good to dust 'n' sweep;
An', 'cause a poor-farm's 'bout the on'y place 'at she kin be,
I'm glad she's come to our one, she's such company fur me.

III.

An' ev'rybody's glad she's come, an' Mrs. Beck she's cried
'Cause Nanny looks jus' like her little Elleneer 'at died;
An' poor ol' Cap'n Pen'leton, whose eyesight's gettin' dim,
Is all the time a-askin' her to read the news to him.

IV.

Oh, Nanny, little Nanny, don't you grieve, fur I've a plan;
I'm a-goin' far away from here as soon as I'm a man;
An' I'll make a lot o' money, an' come back again some day;
Then, after you have married me, we both kin go away!

TWO ROSEBUDS.

"TO-NIGHT," a rosebud whispered, "I shall lie
Close to my lady's beating heart."
"And I,"
Her fragrant sister murmured, while she smiled,
"Shall go to cheer a little crippled child."
Swayed by the wind, they kissed most tenderly;
"Ah," breathed the first, "how happy you must be!
Sweet though it is to die upon her breast,
Your mission to the sick child is the best!"

THE STORY THAT WAS NOT TOLD.

I.

ONCE on a time," old Ben begins
To young Ben on his knee,
"There was a little lad like you,
Who ran away to sea—"
"To see what?" asks the younker then;
"To S–E–A!" explains old Ben.

II.

"An', when he gets aboard the ship,"
Old Ben goes on to say,
"They weighs the anchor pretty soon—"
"And how much did it weigh?"
The younker interrupts him then;
"Avast, my hearty!" says old Ben.

III.

"Just reef that busy little tongue,
An' let the anchor be;
Now who's a-spinnin' of this yarn?
Is it you, my lad, or me?"
"You," says the drowsy yonnker then;
"Well, let me spin it!" growls old Ben.

IV.

"An', when the anchor's weighed at last,
They ups an' crowds all sail;
The ship was goin' whalin', an'—"
"What—was—she—going—to—whale?"
The yonnker, half asleep, asks then;
"Whale nothin'!" frowning says old Ben.

V.

"Why, ain't you heard, mate, of the whale
That flounders in the sea?—
The thing that swallered Jonah up?—
The W–A–L–E?"
The younker's blue eyes close just then;
"Here, lift your head up!" cries old Ben.

VI.

"Now, spike my guns, mate, can it be
You've went an' gone asleep?
Well, anchor here your little head;
The yarn 'll maybe keep."
All silent is the younker then;
"Just hear him snorin'!" says old Ben.

POINT LACE AND DIAMONDS.

"HERE are point lace and diamonds,
And, my dear, they are all for you,"
Said a spider, whose web one morning
Sparkled with drops of dew.
"My thanks," the little fly chuckled,
"Now really I can't express,
But the fact is, you good, kind creature,
I never was fond of dress!"

ELEVEN OR NONE.

I.

A KINDLY-LOOKING gentleman one day accosted me;
"Do you know any one who wants eleven dogs?" said he.
"They're so gentle and so good
That I'd keep them if I could,
But I really can't gratify their appetite for food."

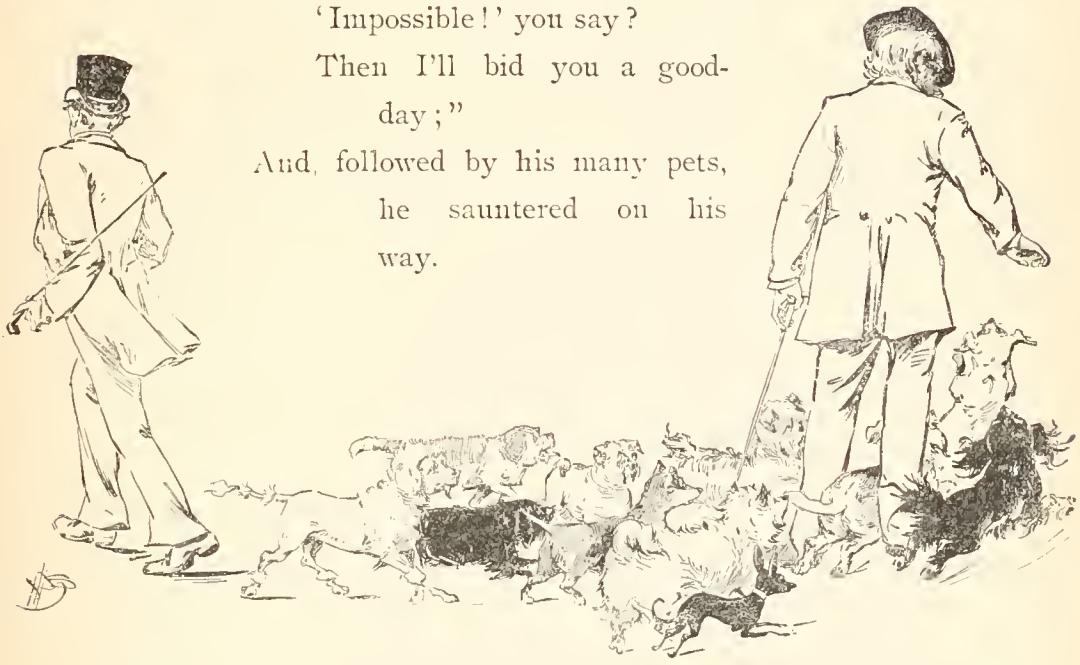
II.

I told him that I'd like *one*, but he slowly shook his head;
"There are many who have asked me if I'd give them *one*," he said,
"But I've such a tender heart
With compunction it would smart
If ever from each other the eleven I should part!

III.

"They would soon pine for each other, and the person who wants one
Must either take the family or be content with none!

'Impossible!' you say?
Then I'll bid you a good-day;"
And, followed by his many pets,
he sauntered on his way.



NOT LOST.

I.

SHE toddled through the busy store,
Apparently forsaken;
"And are you lost, dear?" some one said,
At which the little curly head
Was negatively shaken.

II.

"My mamma told me not to move,
And I—I didn't mind her;
But," said the naughty wanderer,
"It isn't *me* that's lost—it's *her*;
And now I want to find her!"

THE LITTLE BOY WHO WENT FISHING.

I.

A LITTLE boy, one pleasant day,
Toward a creek pursued his way.

II.

He kept the school-house out of sight,
Looking behind ofttimes in fright;

III.

And in one hand, as on he stole,
He clutched a willow fishing-pole.

IV.

Down by the meadow swift he passed
Until he reached the creek at last;

V.

Then, with no thought to mar of school,
He cast his line into a pool;

VI.

And, with a smile of calm delight,
He waited for the fish to bite.

VII.

The moments glided swiftly by;
The sun o'erhead was getting high;

VIII.

But not a fish would deign to look
The while at his seductive hook;

IX.

Though hungry insects o'er his head
Bit condescendingly instead.

X.

A frog upon a lily-pad
Kept grinning at the luck he had;

XI.

The little boy he sat him down;
His smile contracted to a frown;

XII.

And there, upon the stream's soft brink,
His drowsy eyes began to blink;

XIII.

Till, with his head upon his breast,
He sank back in the sedge to rest;

XIV.

When suddenly he heard a "swish,"
And from the water rose a fish,—

XV.

A fish of such prodigious size
That it would make a thousand fries,—

XVI.

A fish off which a troop might dine,
With a gigantic rod and line!

XVII.

And in gruff tones the monster cried,
The while the little boy it eyed:

XVIII.

"By no barbed hook can we be caught;
We're not so foolish as you thought;

XIX.

"The tables have been turned on you;
Now watch me go a-fishing, too!

XX.

"This very night we'll all enjoy
A chowder made of little boy!"

XXI.

And, looking hideously grim,
The creature cast its line at him.

XXII.

The truant watched the hook descend,
While every hair stood up on end;

XXIII.

Till, with a twist expert and neat,
It caught him by his trousers' seat;

XXIV.

And then, with juvenile despair,
He dangled wildly in the air!

XXV.

And while, with a complacent grin,
His scaly captor drew him in,

XXVI.

A piercing scream the silence broke,
And then—the little boy awoke!

XXVII.

And, though of fish there was no trace,
Fresh danger threatened in its place;

XXVIII.

With look foreboding little good,
Before him his stern father stood!

OLD MOTHER MERRYTHORPE.

I.

YOU could see her every day
With a big and tempting tray
At the little old red school-house that was just across the way,
'Twixt the time of twelve and one,
Ere the lessons had begun,
When the neighborhood was echoing with jollity and fun.
Old Mother Merrythorpe, all the children knew her;
Oh, the goodies that she had—so many, many, many!
Everything beneath the sun to draw a youngster to her;
Everything to charm away a youngster's burning penny!

II.

When they heard the cheery sound
Of her voice upon the ground,
The boys and girls would leave their play to flock in crowds around;
And, oh, the thriving trade
In the dainties she displayed,
And the tinkle in the tincup that the rain of coppers made!

Old Mother Merrythorpe, all the children knew her;
Oh, the goodies that she had—so many, many, many!
Everything beneath the sun to draw a youngster to her;
Everything to charm away a youngster's burning penny!

III.

Oh, the jujube flecked with flour!
Oh, the lemon balls so sour!
Oh, the lollipops that lasted (if you sucked 'em) half an hour!
And the money that was spent
Brought to all such deep content
That none was ever heard to say he wanted back his cent!
Old Mother Merrythorpe, all the children knew her;
Oh, the goodies that she had—so many, many, many!
Everything beneath the sun to draw a youngster to her;
Everything to charm away a youngster's burning penny!

IV.

Not alone is courage rife
In the battle's heat and strife;
There are many unknown heroes in the humble walks of life.
Did they dream, in all their sport,
That the simple, honest heart
Had a crippled soldier-husband and a grandchild to support?

Brave Mother Merrythorpe, all the children knew her;
Oh, the goodies that she had—so many, many, many!
Everything beneath the sun to draw a youngster to her;
Everything to charm away a youngster's burning penny!

A PAIR OF STRANGE BIRDS.

THEY'VE a pair of strange birds at the Zoo,
Of a species undoubtedly new;
The male, on one leg,
Guards a promising egg,
While he plaintively murmurs "traloo;"
"Me too!" then his mate goes; "me too!"

A DEAR LITTLE SCHOOL-MA'AM.

I.

With her funny little glasses you'd have thought her very wise
If it wasn't for the laughter that was peeping from her eyes;
Just the queerest and the dearest little school-ma'am ever known,
Whose way of teaching boys and girls was certainly her own.

II.

"I give my brightest pupil," in a pleasant tone she said,
"A little corner by himself to show that he is head,
And, to spare the tender feelings of the dullest boy, I put
All the others in a circle so you can't tell which is foot.

III.

"Whenever any pupil in his lessons doesn't miss,
I encourage his endeavors with a penny sugar-kiss;
And, since this slight upon the rest might too severely fall,
I take the box of kisses and I hand 'em round to all.

IV.

"I've asked them what they'd like to be a dozen times or more,
And each, I find, intends when grown to keep a candy store;
So, thinking that they ought to have some knowledge of their trade,
I've put a little stove in just to show them how it's made.

V.

"Enthusiastic? Bless you, it is wonderful to see
How interested in such things a little child can be;
And, from their tempting taffy and their luscious lollipops,
I'm sure they'll do me credit when they come to open shops."

VI.

And, with a nod that plainly showed how free she was from doubt,
She deftly smoothed the wrinkles of her snowy apron out—
Just the queerest and the dearest little school-ma'am ever known,
Whose way of teaching boys and girls was certainly her own!

THE MUSICAL HAT.

THE borrowed umbrella said to the hat,
"Of music you're rather fond, I see;"
At which the hat appeared quite amused;
"Why, I've a band of my own," said he.

When the borrowed umbrella heard this remark,
He was puzzled considerably thereat;
"A brass band?" after a while he asked;
"No, sir; a silk band!" said the hat.

THE FAMILY THAT WENT TO SQUANTUM.

I.

A MAN bought a donkey and cart for himself,
And a pony his wife was to ride,
And, just for the use of his dear little boy,
A goat and small wagon beside;
And thinking of suitable names for them all
Kept the three up that night until ten;
For the goat they chose Willy, the donkey plain Ned,
While the pony was called Gwendolen.

II.

"Let's see," said the little man early next morn;
"I think for our first jaunt we'll go
To Squantum to visit our cousins, the Smiths;
They'll be quite pleased to see us, I know.
I'll just put the side-saddle on Gwendolen,
And harness up Ned to the cart,
After Willy the goat to his wagon is hitched,
And then all together we'll start."

III.

So out of the village in triumph they rode,
At which all the windows were raised,
And children ran after them, clapping their hands,
While their mothers and fathers just gazed.
"We've made quite a stir," said the pleased little man.
"Keep your foot, love, in that stirrup-cup;"
And just then, as Ned raised his long ears and stopped,
He timidly added, "Get up!"

IV.

But Ned was so stubborn he wouldn't obey;
"It's too bad," he said, "I declare!"
And then, as he nervously reached for the whip,
The donkey's heels flew in the air.
"Whoa there!" shrieked the little man, dodging in fright.
"Do you hear me, sir? Whoa there, I say!
Good donkey! Whoa now! Did you see that, my dear?
Why, he'll soon kick the dashboard away!"

V.

At length with an apple they coaxed Ned to go,
So, with a "hurrah!" they rode on,
Till coming toward them they saw a small boy,
Who by a goat also was drawn:

And the little man's boy shouted out in surprise,
"Why, he's got a goat, papa, like me!"
While the little man smilingly nodded his head,
As he said, "Bless my soul, so I see!"

VI.

And Willy seemed very excited indeed
As the other goat came into view,
Till they suddenly charged on each other when near,
While backward the little boys flew.
They weren't much hurt, though all covered with dust,
And the two goats were parted at last,
While the family set out for Squantum again,
And the strange boy drove off rather fast.

VII.

Then Gwendolen played them a very queer prank
As they came to the top of a hill;
She noticed a haystack that stood by the road,
And set about having her fill.
Though the little wife chirruped, "Come, Gwendolen, come,"
With often a poke or a nudge,
The obstinate pony kept eating away,
And no one could get her to budge.

VIII.

"This will never do—never!" the little man cried,
With a look of despair on his brow.
"We'd better continue our journey afoot;
Squantum's only a mile or so now."
And so, while the pony, and donkey, and goat
Were left behind munching the hay,
The family, highly disgusted, got down,
And walked all the rest of the way!

THE PARVENU CABBAGE.

"I THINK," said the parvenu cabbage,
Which fancied it was a rose,
"We roses—I mean, we green ones—
Are the prettiest flower that grows."
"You're not a rose, by a long shot,"
Was the muskmelon's quick reply;
"Then, pray," said the parvenu cabbage,
"What kind of a flower am I?"

SEVEN AND TEN.

I.

SWEETHEART—nay, let me call you so
If but for the sake of the long ago—
Do you remember the golden weather
When in the garden we played together?
When the greatest grief that could mar our joy
Was a dear dead bird or a broken toy?
You were my little sweetheart then,
When you were seven and I was ten.

II.

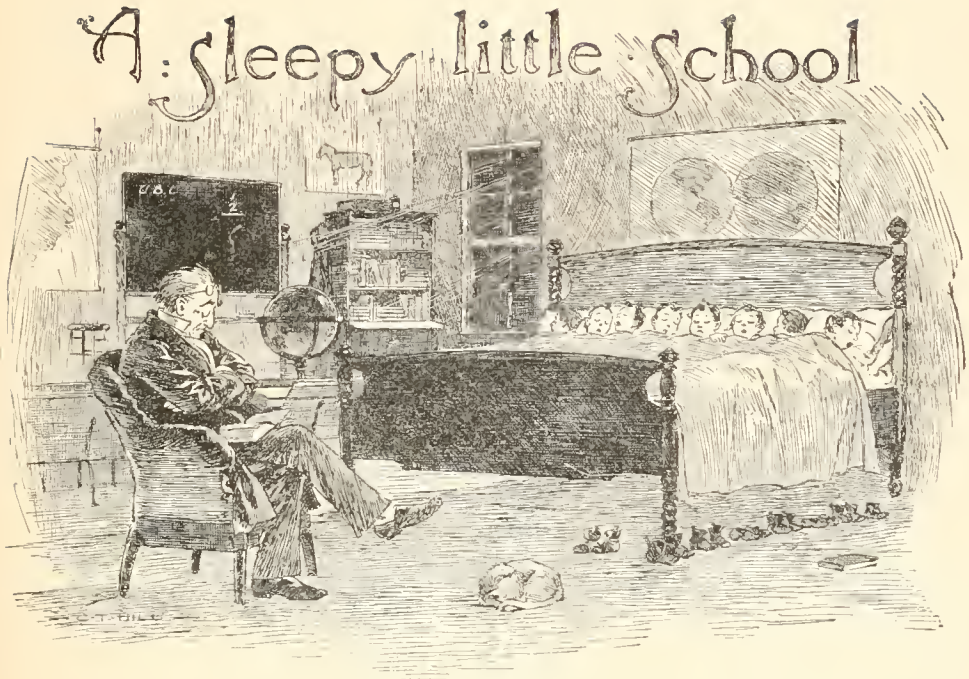
Over our back-yard fence one day
To where you stood I had made my way;
And happily there we would pass the hours
In a little kingdom among the flowers;
And ne'er could the sway of a monarch be
More absolute than was yours o'er me;
A tiny despot you ruled me then,
When you were seven and I was ten.

III.

And, when with my parents I went away,
You said you would be my wife some day;
While, at the thought of the sad to-morrow,
You clung to me in your sweet child's sorrow,
And your soft eyes filled, and the tears *would* flow—
A foolish fancy?—well, maybe so,
But, ah, how earnest we both were then,
When you were seven and I was ten.

IV.

Sweet, how quickly the years have flown—
The little maid is a woman grown!
I have never forgotten you, darling—never;
I loved you then, and will love you ever;
Whisper the promise once more you made
When we parted there in the old tree's shade,
And let it be always as it was then,
When you were seven and I was ten!



I.

A JOLLY old professor kept a school for little boys,
And he'd romp with them in play-time, and he wouldn't mind their noise;
While in his little school-room, with its head against the wall,
Was a bed of such proportions it was big enough for all.

II.

"It's for tired little pupils," he explained, "for you will find
How very wrong indeed it is to force the budding mind;
When any one grows sleepy and he can't hold up his head,
I make him lay his primer down and send him off to bed!

III.

"And sometimes it will happen on a warm and pleasant day,
When the little birds upon the trees go tooral-looral-lay,
And wide-awake and studious it's difficult to keep,
One by one they'll get a-nodding till the whole class is asleep!

IV.

"Then, before they're all in dreamland, and their funny snores begin,
I close the shutters softly so the sunlight can't come in;
After which I put the school-books in their order on the shelf,
And, with nothing else to do, I take a little nap myself!"

TWO FRIENDLY KINGS.

I.

THE King of the Okichobies,
Hi-ty, walked out each day,
While a buck or two of his retinue
Attended him on his way.

II.

His subjects, when he was passing,
Would grovel on ev'ry side,
And all of the while he would nod and smile
To show he was gratified.

III.

He'd wear just a simple breech-cloth,
The skin of a tiger-cat,
While, perched on his head (from a wreck, 'twas said)
Was a battered old stovepipe hat.

IV.

When he'd reach the end of his country,
Which wouldn't take long, he'd see
On his own small land, with some slaves at hand,
The King of the Lolligee.

V.

Though not at all prepossessing,
Ti-hy was still much liked;
He went in for things such as plumes and rings,
And carried a club well-spiked.

VI.

For years it had been their custom
To take, so they'd meet, a walk
(Except when it rained, or either complained),
And have just a pleasant talk.

VII.

"I'm a most agreeable person,"
Hi-ty would first say, "but
If I were inclined to be nasty, mind,
I could blow up your royal hut!"

VIII.

And Ti-hy would then add gently,
While his toe in the sand he'd scratch,
"If it comes to that, I could smash your hat,
And root up your melon-patch!"

IX.

And then from his much-prized stovepipe
Hi-ty would fleck the dust;
"Your mother-in-law and your honored pa,"
He'd murmur, "are well, I trust?"

X.

"Quite," Ti-hy, much pleased, would answer;
"And your little ones?—bless each pet!
That shower last night came in just right;
Have your melon-plants come up yet?"

XI.

So they'd chat in a friendly manner,
And to me it is not just clear
Why they wished at heart, when about to part,
They didn't live quite so near!

A LITTLE PIPPIN.

I.

A LITTLE pippin sighed: "Ah, me!
My love is on another tree.
Each day, as through the leaves I've spied her,
Oh, how I've wished that I was 'side her!"

II.

Poor little love-lorn pippin!—he
At last was taken from the tree;
And, though he never after spied her,
He soon discovered he was cider!

WHAT IT WAS.

I.

OH, they were as happy as happy could be,
Those two little boys who were down by the sea,
As each, with a shovel grasped tight in his hand,
Like a sturdy young laborer dug in the sand!

II.

And it finally happened, while looking around.
That, beside a big shell, a small star-fish they found,—
Such a wouderful sight that two pairs of blue eyes
Grew large for a moment with puzzled surprise.

III.

Then—"I know," said one, with his face growing bright,
"It's the dear little star that we've watched every night;
But last night, when we looked, it was nowhere on high,
So, of course, it has dropped from its home in the sky!"

A TALE OF PIRACY.

I.

'TWAS in '65, my little cove,
As I recollecks, the day
We ships our cargo, with nary embargo,
An' sails from Ja-ma-ki-a.

II.

Then it's yo, heave ho! an' it's heave agin!
An' the wind a-blowin' free!
With plenty o' 'baccy to last, by crackey,
A sailor's life fur me!

III.

Sorghum 'lasses our cargo was;
Our ship the "Sassy Jane";
No rakisher sailin', an' she a-hailin'
From Kennebunk, down in Maine.

IV.

An' we haven't been more than two days out,
When the duff don't seem to please;
There ain't the richness of raisins an' sichness,
So we ups an' we mutinies.

V.

The cap'n, the fust, an' secun' mate,
The grizzled old bos'n, too
(Fur One-eye Slover, the cook, come over),
An' agin 'em the hull ship's crew!

VI.

An' a terrible, bloodthirsty, willainous crew,
As couldn't be possible wuss;
Which the same wore ear-rings to help their hearings,
An' was tattooed promiscuous!

VII.

Then it's pippety-pop, an' bang away,
An' it's cut an' it's come agin,
With balls a-shriekin', an' knives a-reekin',
Till sullen-like they gives in!

VIII.

An' then, a-knowin' they'd be picked up
If we set the hull lot afloat,
We makes 'em risk it with plain sea-biscuit
In a leaky old jolly-boat.

IX.

Then up the bonny black flag we runs,
A-beginnin' of desp'rit lives,
An' the mutiny-breeder we 'lects as leader,
An' kivers oursel's with knives.

X.

Full many a gallant merchantm'n,
A-loaded with shiny gold,
We fights a duel, an' takes most cruel,
An' lightens up of its hold.

XI.

But sometimes we gets a-thinkin' nights,
As we sails upon our course,
We ain't of recent been actin' decent,
An' we has what you calls remorse.

XII.

An' all of a sudden we quar'ly grows,
A-achin' each other to strike ;
There was two begin it, then more comes in it,
An' soon it is gen'ral-like.

XIII.

A fight as lasted three days an' nights,
An' as bad as ever I see,
Not once a-stoppin', an' men a-droppin',
Till all that was left was me!

XIV.

An', with all that valible treasure mine,
A tempest comes down at last,
An' I keeps on sailin', an' bailin' an' bailin',
But the wessel's a-fillin' fast.

XV.

So with a hen-coop over I jumps,
An' on it I floats a week,
Till I makes an island, an' gets on dry land,
So hoarse I kin just but speak.

XVI.

An' there fur eight long years I stays,
A-drinkin' of misery's dregs,
With no one near me to try an' cheer me,
An' nourished on penguins' eggs.

XVII.

Eight weary, dreary, teary years,
An' biliousy-like an' pale;
Fur comp'ny sighin', an' rags a-flyin'
A-tryin' to catch a sail!

XVIII.

But, when I'm a-givin' up hope at last,
A wessel it heaves in sight,
An' I cooks up a story that's noways gory,
Explainin' of my sad plight.

XIX.

An' many's an' many's the time since then
I've sat me down to weep,
To think of them millions—I may say billions—
An' hundreds o' fathoms deep!

XX.

Fur, with what I've got, my little cove,
At the bottom of the sea,
All your millionaires, with their bonds an' shares,
Ain't a sarkumstance 'long o' me!

DICK AND KITTY.

I.

FAIR AND SWEET is Grandma in her cap of snowy lace,
Rocking, oh, so softly, with a smile upon her face,
While the twilight deepens, and her head is drooping low
O'er the blissful memories of long and long ago.
Suddenly she rouses.
"Kitty:" calls out she.
"In a moment, Grandma, I am coming with your tea!"

II.

At the kitchen window truant Kitty lingers still,
While the cup of tea is growing cold upon the sill;
Outside in the dewy grass some one waiting stands,
Looking up so pleadingly, holding fast her hands.
Grandma doesn't know it!
"Kitty!" calls out she.
"In a moment, Grandma, I am coming with your tea!"

III.

"Ah!" the dear old voice goes on, "Kitty, do you know
Dick looks much as Grandpa did some fifty years ago?
Straight and tall your Grandpa stood—I think I see him yet!
How my heart went out to him the night when first we met!"
Grandma's voice is trembling.

"Kitty!" calls out she.

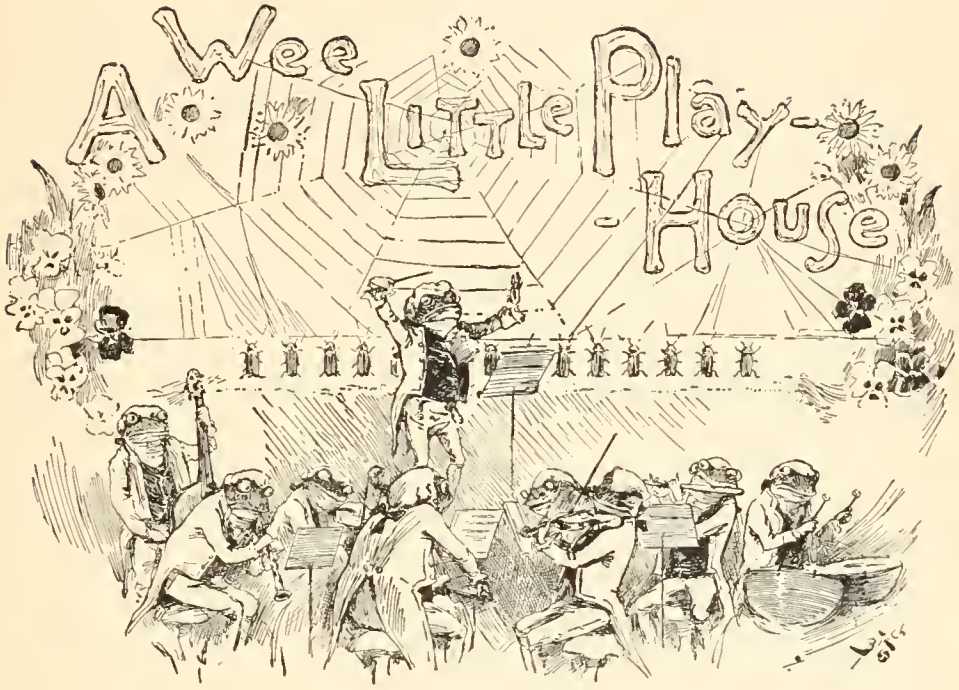
"In a moment, Grandma, I am coming with your tea!"

IV.

"Kitty," Grandma says again, her old eyes growing dim,
"Dick is such a bonny lad, of course, you'll marry him."
"Will you, darling?" whispers Dick, and Kitty flushes red.
"Yes," she whispers back, and shyly bends her pretty head.
Ah, unconscious Grandma!

"Kitty!" calls out she.

"In a moment, Grandma, I am coming with your tea!"



I.

DEEP a-wood there's a wee little play-house I've found,
Roofed o'er by the leaves growing thickly around,
Where the elfin-folk troop, with their spirits elate,
O' nights when their watches are pointing to eight.

II.

They have cunningly raised up a stage of green moss,
And a spider has spun a fine curtain across,
While the footlights are fireflies ranged in a row,
With their wing-shaded lamps shining full on the show.

III.

A pompous frog orchestra fiddles away,
While the lily-bell dressing-rooms dreamily sway,
As the little play-people, with fast-beating hearts,
Look in mirrors of dew to make up for their parts.

IV.

All around sit the spectators, holding gay chats,
With the ladies bedecked in the highest of hats,
Till a tinkle is heard on a gold buttercup,
And gloves beat pit-a-pat as the curtain goes up.

V.

Oh, the wonderful plays these small actors strut through!
I would like to attend one, I'm sure—wouldn't you?
But, if we both went, it would fill them with fright,
And there wouldn't be any performance that night!

A LITTLE FAIRY.

I.

SHE was a little fairy sprite
In the wonderful spectacle each night;
And, long past the hour when sleepyheads
Drift to dreams in their downy beds,
She carried the train of the sweet-faced queen
In the glittering transformation scene.

II.

Which of them knew, who saw her there,
Tired and flushed in the limelight's glare,
Looking up with a half-sad smile,
What a practical fairy she was the while?—
That all of her meagre fairy-pay
Was brought to "mother" on Saturday?

III.

Ah, that night when the house was packed,
And a wild, fierce flame in the garish act
Leaped up, threatening all about,
And she with her small hands crushed it out!—
Cheer upon cheer, and then a groan,
As she fell on the stage with a little moan!

IV.

Poor little fairy, sleeping now,
With, oh, such peace on your childish brow,
Why should a sigh disturb your rest,
As you lie—that lily upon your breast—
With mocking splendors forever done,
And your beautiful Fairyland—just won!

ESCAPING A SHOWER.

I.

TWO crabs, who were out on the beach to walk,
Shook claws when they met and stopped to talk.

II.

"We're going to have a storm," one said;
"Just look at those big clouds overhead!"

III.

"Then, if we stay," said the other, "it's plain
That both of us will be caught in the rain."

IV.

So, ere the threatened shower began,
Back in the water they quickly ran!

Teddy O'Rourke

(A Gamin's Story)

I.

"Teddy O'Rourke's my chum, you see,
An' how it happened was, him an' me
Was down at the dock with the rest that day,
A-lookin' fur somethin' to come our way,
Fur shines, I tell ye, was precious few,
An' we thought we could pick up a dime or two,
Along with some of the other chaps,
Luggin' a feller's valise, perhaps.

II.

"It was time the boat was a-gittin' in,
An' of all the crowd on the dock, who'd been
Waitin' fur friends, none took our eye
Like two who was standin' just close by—
A lady, if ever was one, I guess—
You could tell as much by her way an' dress—
With a little girl who had 'bout the looks
Of them kids you see in the picture-books,
With her big blue eyes an' her hair like gold—
I s'pose she was four or five years old.
An' blest if she doesn't tell Ted an' me
How her pa's on board, an' how glad she'll be
When he is home with 'em both again.
An' Teddy he sees the boat just then.

III.

"Well, the boat swings inter the slip at last,
An', while they're busy a-makin' fast,
With the passengers ready a'most to land,
The little girl loses her mother's hand,
When everyone's crowdin' an' pushin' hard,
An' blamed if she doesn't fall overboard—
I can't ezzactly tell how she does,
'Cause, 'fore I knows it, why, there it was—
An' then there follers a great big splash
As Teddy goes after her in a flash!

IV.

"Talk about swimmin', now, Ted kin swim!
None of the fellers I knows tops *him*.
Stay under the longest you ever see;
Dive about twict as high as me;
Go out so fur you'd be seairt clean through;
Why, they ain't a thing 'at he dassent do!—
More like a duck, I guess you'd say
If ever you saw him in some day—
An', though the tide is a-runnin' strong,
He strikes right out, an' it ain't so long
'Fore he's clingin' with her to the slippery spiles,
An' she's *safe*—an' he just looks up an' smiles!

V.

"Then they git the little girl up all right,
An' nothin's the matter with her 'cept fright,
While Teddy unhelped climbs up the beams
With the water a-runnin' from him in streams;
An', while he's shiverin', kinder, there,
The little girl's ma don't seem to care
At all fur the people a-standin' by,
But gives him a kiss an' begins to cry;
An' the little girl's pa ain't noways slow
In grabbin' his hand—an' he won't let go;
While everybody upon the pier
Just whoops her up in a bustin' cheer;
An' one of 'em yells out, after that,
'Come, chip in, all of you! Here's the hat!'

VI.

"An' didn't they? Well, now, they just *did!*
Teddy was allers a lucky kid!
An', while around with the hat they goes,
Everyone reaches down in his clo'es,
An' you'd laugh to see how the ol' plug fills
With dimes an' quarters an' ha'fs an' bills,
Till at last it's a-holdin' so much tin
Looks 'sif the crowu would just bust right in;
An' they takes the money 'at they have riz,
An' they goes to Teddy an' says it's his.

VII.

"'What?' says Teddy. 'This ain't all mine!'
An' you oughter have seed his black eyes shine;
An' I feels so good 'at I gives him a shove,
Fur I knows just what he's a-thinkin' of—
It's of his mother, who's purty old,
An' that sister of his'n the doctor's told
If she only could go fur a good long spell
Out in the country she might git well—
An' everyone laughs 'cause he stares so hard,
While the little girl's pa takes out a card
That says where Teddy's to call next day,
An' they goes in a hack of their own away,
While some one tells Teddy to scoot home quick,
An' change his clo'es so he won't git sick.

VIII.

"That's about all,—'cept Teddy O'Rourke
Has got a chance, an' has gone to work
In the little girl's pa's big dry-goods store,
An' he ain't a-shinin' 'em up no more;
An' now he's a-goin' to free-school nights,
An' he's learnin' so 'at he reads an' writes,
While I tells him to keep on peggin' away,
An' he'll be a big duck hisself some day.
—An' me? Oh, Teddy 'll look out fur me—
Teddy O'Rourke's my *chum*, you see!"

IN THE OLD DAYS.

I.

IN the old days, so long ago,
When on the waxen floor you met,
And, to a measure grave and slow,
You danced with her the minuet;
When flutes and viols wove a rhyme
That brought rare flushes to each brow,
And made wee buckled shoes keep time,
Ah, love was much the same as now!
So, grandsire, I can understand,
When, to your pleadings soft and low,
She put in yours her little hand,
How glad your heart you ne'er should part,
In the old days, so long ago!

II.

In the old days, so long ago,
Sweet, tender eyes, with love ashine,

Looked up in yours, come weal or woe,
While in them there was trust divine;
Till, as along life's road you passed,
Cheeks whitened, heads began to bow,
And faltering grew your steps at last—
Ah, love was much the same as now!
So, grandsire, I can understand,
When came to you the hot tears' flow,
With that one clasp of her dear hand,
How sad your heart that you must part,
In the old days, so long ago!

REST AND UNREST.

ON the soft bosom of a stream that flows
Deep in the quiet wood there drifts a rose,
Eager to see the world;
While, in a spot
Unfrequented, grows a forget-me-not.
"Why," the adventurous rose cries, "do you bloom
Where none may ever joy in your perfume?"
"I know not," breathes the flower; "I only know
That for some infinite purpose I am here!"
Then says the rose:
"Are you content thus, dear?"
"Content?—ah, yes—since God has willed it so!"

HOW HE WAS SAVED.

I.

I'VE a neat little farm of ten acres, and a likelier bit of ground
Can't be seen, though I say it who shouldn't, in the country for miles around;
And with two little children to greet me, and a cheery and loving wife,
I lead in the cosey home yonder the pleasantest kind of a life,
Of which I owe all the good fortune and happiness, sir, to the time
I was saved by the power of one sweet word from a life of vice and crime.

II.

'Tis only the simple story of a boy who was somewhat wild,
Who always had loved his mother with a love beyond that of a child,
Who was left alone in the world, sir, to struggle as best he might,
Just when he needed his mother to counsel and guide him right.

III.

I fell among evil companions, and, little by little each day,
Blind to my mother's teaching, from honor I drifted away,
Drowning my thoughts in the glass, sir, becoming a slave to drink,
And, when I had reached my manhood, I stood on a fearful brink!

IV.

For I entered a house at last, sir, just as the midnight hour
Was struck in a neighboring steeple, and I know that an unseen power
Guided my feet through the darkened hall to the room of a sleeping child,
Who lisped, as I gazed upon her, "Mother," and sweetly smiled!

V.

Mother! My hardened heart beat fast when I heard that sacred name;
There by that pure, sweet child I stood, covered with guilty shame,
Thinking, with throbbing head bowed down, of the wretched and misspen
years,
Till my heart was filled with wild remorse and my eyes grew dim wit
tears—
Tears that fell faster and faster when I pictured the bitter grief
Of *her* in her home in heaven to see her boy a *thief!*

. . . . . .

Thank God! With my soul unstained by crime I softly went my way,
With the lightest heart that I had known for many a long, long day,
Eager to leave my life of sin, and try to take up anew,
Far from the city's pitfalls, one that was honest and true.

VI.

And ever since then I've prospered—for the neat little farm you see
Is a proof of the luck that followed—and I'm sure you'll agree with me
In thinking my angel-mother was watching o'er me that night,
To guide, through the word of a little child, my wandering feet aright!

LITTLE BOY BLUE.

I.

HOME come the cow and fleecy white sheep,
But where is Little Boy Blue?
There, with his horn, he's fallen asleep
Out in the grass and the dew.
Sleepy birds chirp in their downy nest,
Safe from all harm 'neath the mother-breast;
Fades the soft light, so, little one, rest—
Rest, little shepherd, rest!

II.

Little Boy Blue is weary of play;
Take from his wee hand the horn;
Softly its echoes floated all day
Up from the meadows and corn.
Let him dream on in the fading light,
While the world over, all robed in white,
Sweetly the children murmur "good night"—
Little Boy Blue, good night!

GOOD NEWS FROM HOME.

I.

IT was out in the western country;
Some actors had come to town—
Just a few poor, struggling players,
Who never had grasped renown—

And the shaky old frame building
Was crowded with noisy men;
'Twas a chance to see a performance
That might not happen again.

II.

The lamps of the stage flared dimly
On the players who strutted out;
What though their jests were hackneyed,
They always evoked a shout;
And plaudits were freely given,
Until at last, from the wing,
With a chord from the old piano,
A child came out to sing.

III.

"I've good news at last from home, boys—
Good news from home!" she sang;
And, thrilling them all to silence,
Her voice through the old hall rang,
Till eyes somehow grew moistened,
And great, rough hearts were stirred
To tender thoughts by the pathos
Of the plain little song they heard.

IV.

Ah, how that childish treble
  Bridged o'er the lapse of years!
Faces saddened by waiting
  Shone in a mist of tears;
And memories were awakened
  That lay at the heart half crushed,
Till the last sweet strain was dying,
  And still the house was hushed.

V.

And up rose a bearded miner,
  Who'd listened with drooping head—
"God bless the little singer!"
  In a voice that was choked he said;
"Back East I've a gray-haired mother,
  Who's wondering where I roam;
I'm through with the old life, fellows;
  To-morrow I'm going home!"

VI.

There followed a golden shower;
  So sweet was the child and fair
She seemed an angel from heaven
  Whom God himself sent there;

And back in their rude log cabins,
By the flickering candle's light,
Why, many a good long letter
Was written home that night!

DAY-STARS.

I.

THE daisies on the hillside play
That they are little stars all day;
They nod and twinkle in the grass
To guide wee cricket-folk that pass,
Till, in the sunset's tender glow,
The soft-eyed cattle homeward go.

II.

"Darlings," the wind says, rustling by,
"The real stars now shine from the sky!"
"Good night!" they whisper, one and all,
As, tired of play, asleep they fall.
"Should any one belated roam,
The other stars will guide him home!"

PANTOMIME.

I.

WHEN I was of rather a tender age,
I dreamed of going upon the stage;
Not in tragedy—oh, dear, no!
That I considered a trifle slow.
Melodrama or comedy?—
Neither of these had charms for me.
Ridiculous as it now may seem,
My pennies all went on pantomime.

II.

I fondly hoped to achieve renown
When I grew up as the jolly Clown;
If not the Clown, as the Harlequin—
Columbine then would be mine to win;
Pantaloon, with his buffets and kicks,
The sorry old butt of the others' tricks—
Bless me! who, with a fresh young heart,
Would think of playing so poor a part?

III.

Ah, how foolish that dream appears,
Now I have come to forty years!
I've a few gray hairs on my head, I'm told—
Proof enough that I'm growing old;
And, though it's a melancholy fact
I never have had a chance to act,
Somehow the feeling in me is rife
I've played in pantomime all my life!

IV.

Not as the Clown, who must be, they say,
A star performer to make it pay;
Nor even the agile Harlequin—
Columbine hasn't been mine to win.
Who are the other grotesques arrayed,
One of whose parts I must have played?
I only remember that poor buffoon,
Kicked and buffeted Pantaloon!